

Inmate who is suing DOC officials is demanding \$65K. **PAGE 3**
Docomo gives \$200K worth of laptops to PSS. **PAGE 6**

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Hafa Adai!

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Bulk of CUC's \$11.7M Yutu expenses: GPA, labor

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The bulk of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s \$11.7-million expense for Super Typhoon Yutu restoration went to the Guam Power Authority and labor.

According to CUC's chief financial officer's reports for the first

quarter of fiscal year 2019, from October 2018 to January 2019, Yutu restoration expenses reached \$11,742,302.

Of the \$11.7 million spent during the four-month period, \$5,087,939 was to GPA and \$4,141,797 went to local labor costs.

Last December, CUC executive
See BULK on Page 4

File photo shows power personnel, including from off-island, fixing power poles damaged by Super Typhoon Yutu last Oct. 24 and 25. The bulk of the \$11.7 million that the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. spent went to the Guam Power Authority and for labor. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is reimbursing CUC for all typhoon-related expenses.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE



Street market eyed in 3 weeks

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

The popular weekly Thursday Street Market is set to make a comeback almost four months after Super Typhoon Yutu destroyed several electrical components necessary for it to be held.

The street market at the Gaapan Fishing Base may be making a comeback in as early as three weeks, according to CNMI Arts Council executive director Parker Yobei.

"Next week we would be installing the meter box," he told *Saipan Tribune*. "When that meter box is ready and

the weatherhead is installed, then we can call in the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to schedule a reconnection to the island's power grid."

The street market, which

is run by the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs' CNMI Arts Council, had not been held since late October 2018, when Super Typhoon Yutu destroyed several

electrical components needed to run the street market.

"We got to make sure our site is up and ready, but we are getting there," Yobei said.

See MARKET on Page 4

Section 902 Consultations to be convened

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres will be in Washington, D.C. these next two weeks for several meetings and to attend the National Governors Association's 111th Annual Winter Meeting.

At the request of Torres, the CNMI



will also be convening Section 902 Consultations later this week with the federal government to discuss matters related to immigration and the CNMI's economic viability.

"With our re-

quest for Section 902 consultations being granted, my administration has been hard at work preparing the CNMI's case to the federal government in order to protect our economic viability and enhance our ability to deliver essential public services for our com-

See SECTION 902 on Page 4

Ill weather seen to pass near Marianas

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The National Weather Service forecasts that the tropical disturbance brewing off the coast of Kosrae will pass near

the Marianas chain of islands this week.

According to a craft advisory from the National Weather Service on Tiyan, Guam, northeast winds of 20 to 25 knots are expected

through most of the week and winds will increase by the weekend as the tropical disturbance passes.

Fresh to strong northeast trade winds will continue to

See WEATHER on Page 4

INSIDE



LOCAL

The Seabees have ended their relief efforts on Tinian in the wake of Super Typhoon Yutu.

PAGE 5



WORLD

Hundreds of Islamic State group militants are hiding among the civilian population.

PAGE 15



LIFE & STYLE

Chicago police said Sunday they're still seeking a follow-up interview with Jussie Smollett.

PAGE 17



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Local

Toyota airbag recall still ongoing

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Customers of Atkins Kroll Inc. are being reminded that the Toyota airbag recall is still ongoing, and that all car owners are being encouraged to have their vehicles checked at AK Saipan.

Toyota is doing a recall of its cars due to the potentially deadly Takata front passenger airbag inflators that pose the risk of exploding shrapnel from its airbags. A total of 1.7 million Toyota vehicles were recalled in the North Ameri-

can market last month.

Toyota has, in fact, been advertising heavily to inform all of its customers about the recall, said Ernie A. Galito, AK marketing and communication director. "If you own one [Toyota vehicle] from 2003 to 2008, bring it in for the Takata airbag repair and we will give you an oil change for free."

He added that AK Toyota CNMI and Guam has lost contact with some of the original owners because of the transfer of ownership, that's why they are advertising the recall

to inform all owners.

"A lot of the [owners of cars] on the road today are not the original ones. People go off island, they sell [the car] to their friends, or they give it to their relatives, so we don't have the original owners in our database anymore," said Galito.

"That's why we advertise for the people to come and see us. We get them in our database and if something comes up that may apply to the safety of their vehicles then we can contact them or we can introduce them to the new car

models. like the new 2020 Toyota Corolla."

Galito said that Saipan has the highest incidents, in terms of percentage, of recall repairs anywhere in the world. "The reason is we are in a smaller community. We were able to get all the people to come in and get their repairs."

Galito added that Super Typhoon Yutu has damaged a lot of vehicles with some interior of the cars being drenched by rainwater. "You can clean your car but the mold, sometimes, you can't get that smell out."

"The car may be fine me-

chanically but you don't want your children or yourself to get sick. So, sometimes, people just try to get a new car [replacement]."

Galito is also inviting their customers to test drive the 2020 Corolla, the 12th generation of one of the world's best-selling sedans, and experience firsthand its safety features—blind spot monitoring, pre-collision system, dynamic radar cruise con-

trol, lane departure alert with steer assist, lane tracing assist, automatic high beams, and road sign assist.

"The idea is to keep the driver and passenger safe; it alleviates the fear of driving or running over somebody. Customers who will test drive the 2020 Corolla will get the chance to review the car, examine how the ride was in terms of visibility, quietness of the cabin, and leg room."

Gaming committee hopes for CCC bill's passage

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The House Gaming Committee will be working on the passage of House Bill 21-11, a piece of legislation that would clarify the Commonwealth Casino Commission's powers.

The bill was first introduced in the 20th Legislature as H.B. 20-82, but it failed to get the needed three-fourths vote when it returned to the House during their lame-duck session.

Vice speaker Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan) re-introduced the same bill as House Bill 21-11, the Commonwealth Casino Commission Amendment, which would make changes to the Commonwealth Code, given the CCC's unique regulatory oversight.

"I understand the Executive Branch will be revising the fiscal year 2019 budget to account for these losses and for possible revenues from federal resources expended for recovery," said Blanco. "It is the prerogative of the governor to either increase or decrease budgets for the executive departments, agencies, and/or component units. The members of the Ways and Means Committee and I look forward to collaborate with the governor to balance the current and future budgets."

Rep. Ralph Yumul (R-Saipan) is the committee's vice chairman. Its members include vice speaker Lorenzo I. Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan), and Reps. Roman C. Benavente (R-Saipan), Antonio SN Borja (R-Tinian), Joel C. Camacho (R-Saipan), Luis John DLG Castro (R-Saipan), Joseph Leepan T. Guerrero (R-Saipan), Jose I. Itibus (R-Saipan), Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), Janet U. Maratita (R-Saipan), and John Paul P. Sablan (R-Saipan).

The CNMI budget in fiscal year 2019 was a record-high \$258.14 million—\$11.2 million higher than the \$247 million in fiscal year 1997, at the peak of the Commonwealth's economy. The fiscal year 2019 budget was \$21.4 million higher than the fiscal year 2018 budget of \$236.77 million.

other committee members review the bill before calling for a meeting. "We're just giving time for the other members to go over the bill and see if they have other concerns."

"There are a few returning [House] members that voted no [in the last Legislature] and we need to see what are their reasons and other concerns. From there, maybe we can reach a compromise."

CCC to cooperate
CCC executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero said at their last board meeting that they are going to work with the House Gaming Committee regarding H.B. 21-11, especially since there is a proposal to include poker, e-gaming, and pachinko under its regulatory powers.

Deleon Guerrero said Public Law 18-56, the Exclusive Gaming License Act that created the CCC, does not allow them to regulate poker, e-gaming, and pachinko. "We want to discuss this with the [Gaming Committee] chair and the members because we really do need to tighten up P.L. 18-56."

"Poker, pachinko, e-gaming are really kind of outside our realm. Let's just take care of the casino, then fix it."

CCC commissioner Alvaro Santos, during the same meeting, said it has been three years since P.L. 18-56 was enacted but the amendment bill still has not gone through. "We crafted a piece of legislation which included our oversight on poker, but then some outside forces were stronger than our lobbying, that the Legislature decided to finally take it out."

"And they don't want the CCC to regulate the poker industry, so I don't know where this issue is going. I don't think the issue is going anywhere unless the new Legislature has the political will to address these and talk seriously with the [commission] about regulating this industry. There's too many forces out there working against our mandate."

House panel to prioritize balancing budget

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee is looking to work with the administration in making sure all CNMI agencies, departments, and other instrumentalities would get a fair share of the fiscal year 2020 budget, which is expected to be submitted to the Legislature around April.

Committee chair Ivan A.

Blanco (R-Saipan) expects the devastation of Typhoon Mangkhut on Rota and Super Typhoon Yutu on Saipan and Tinian to have some impact on the revenue that will be collected next fiscal year.

"There will definitely be an impact on our fiscal resources, not only because of Mangkhut and Yutu, but because of the previous three back-to-back storms when we mobilized resources and reprogrammed

funding to help citizens prepare," Blanco said.

Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios said in an interview last week that the administration is looking at about a 10-percent cut in the budget proposals and that they plan to encourage all

government agencies and departments to implement their own cost-cutting measures, to scrutinize their spending allocations for their fiscal year 2020 operations.

"The governor [Ralph DLG Torres] is going to issue some very strong memos and communications to all departments regarding the cost-containment efforts that we're going to implement across the board," said Palacios.

The Ways and Means Committee in the House and the Fiscal Affairs Committee in the Senate will be holding separate public hearings and meetings with officials of government agencies and departments to hear their budget proposal.

"I understand the Executive Branch will be revising the fiscal year 2019 budget to account for these losses and for possible revenues from federal resources expended for recovery," said Blanco. "It is the prerogative of the governor to either increase or decrease budgets for the executive departments, agencies, and/or component units. The members of the Ways and Means Committee and I look forward to collaborate with the governor to balance the current and future budgets."

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Inmate who is suing DOC officials is demanding \$65K

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

An inmate at the Department of Corrections is demanding compensation of \$100 a day—for a total of \$65,000—for the period he was allegedly subjected to solitary confinement and not given adequate mental health treatment.

Jerry Ray, through counsel Jeanne H. Rayphand, said he was subjected to cruel and unusual punishment from June 19, 2016, to May 7, 2018.

Ray has been a DOC prisoner since 2012.

Rayphand, of the Northern

Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc., asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to declare that the segregation, isolation, solitary confinement, and the step-down process to which Ray was subjected to at DOC is cruel and unusual punishment—a constitutional violation.

Ray is suing DOC Commissioner Vincent S. Attao and other DOC officials in federal court.

The other defendants in the lawsuit are Division of Corrections director Gregory Castro, then-acting commissioner Georgia M. Cabrera, pre-trial

operations captain Pius P. Yaroitemal, operation commander David Deleon Guerrero, and classification officer Cynthia B. Santos.

Last week, Rayphand and the Office of the Attorney General, which is counsel for the defendants, filed a stipulation to dismiss Yaroitemal and Deleon Guerrero from the lawsuit.

In Ray's motion for summary judgment also filed last week, Rayphand asked the court to declare that the denial of mental healthcare and treatment for Ray constitutes cruel and unusual punishment.

The lawyer asked the court

to order DOC to develop and implement a program that would give prisoners adequate mental healthcare.

Rayphand also noted that the injunctive relief in Ray's complaint is now moot because he is now housed in "open bay" and is receiving regular mental healthcare from a Commonwealth Health Center psychiatrist.

Last Dec. 31, the federal court issued a decision, concluding that Ray exhausted his administrative remedies with respect to his grievances but not with respect to sanctions.

Attao and co-defendants,

through the OAG, have denied Ray's allegations that he was subjected to "solitary confinement" at DOC.

The OAG revealed that DOC lacks the facilities to actually put an inmate in "solitary confinement."

In the defendants' answer to the lawsuit, the OAG disclosed that Ray was sanctioned by DOC on Feb. 5, 2018, and Feb. 12, 2017, but that he did not challenge these sanctions.

The OAG said Ray was caught with contraband and given notice of his possible sanctions, but he did not ap-

peal this sanction.

Ray, a habitual offender, has been an inmate of DOC since 2012 after he was convicted of burglary.

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Japanese Spring Festival pushes through

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinaires@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Japanese Society of the Northern Marianas would push through with the Japanese Festival this Saturday.

The Japanese Spring Festival 2019, which is intended to promote the Japanese culture on Saipan, will take place this year at the Paseo de Marianas from 5pm to 9pm.

The festival used to be held at the Sugar King Park in Garapan. It is being held this year to signify the island's resilience in the wake of Super Typhoon Yutu.

At the same time, February is the month "for welcoming the spring season...[which] is regarded as the time when everybody starts feeling the new life coming up after the long winter season in Japan," said society chair Masato Tezuka in a statement.

"This festival is one of many examples of the historic ties between the Marianas and Japan, and our society is warmly welcoming all residents and visitors," Tezuka added.

NMC to welcome students back

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinaires@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College would be welcoming back its students to the As Terlaje campus tomorrow, about four months after Super Typhoon Yutu damaged most of its buildings.



Eliptico

of Engineers representatives.

"This is a very important day for us because the students would be coming back to the As Terlaje campus for the first time since Super Typhoon Yutu, so the day carries a lot of meaning with it," he said.

"It is a very informal, organic event to welcome back our students. We will be having a more formal event much later."

Twenty-two of NMC's 27 on-campus buildings sustained severe damage while only two of the 37 available classrooms survived the super typhoon in late October 2018.

Currently, Eliptico added that there are about 1,250 students attending the college.

Along with food, which Eliptico noted would be distributed from 11am to 1pm, school supplies would also be given away tomorrow.

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EXPLORE
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Miss Earth pageant contestants make their debut

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The eight contestants of the first Miss Earth Northern

Marianas pageant made their debut last Friday during a sash-pinning ceremony at the Saipan Mayor's Office.

The sashes were presented

to the eight young women by Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang and Saipan Mayor's Office director of operations Joann Aquino to make official

their participation in the CNMI Miss Earth pageant this June.

The contestants were Nicole Malakai, 20; Leisha Deleon Guerrero; Joanna Navarro, 23;



The eight candidates of the upcoming Miss Earth Northern Marianas pageant pose for a photo with Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang, middle, following a pinning ceremony and official debut last Friday.

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

15 ex-Dynasty workers now want \$4.2M

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 15 former workers of the defunct Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino are now demanding damages totaling \$4.2 million and not \$3.4 million as they had earlier sought.

The increased amount is because the 15 former workers, though counsel Samuel I. Mok, are also demanding \$50,000 each—a total of \$750,000—for their mental anguish.

The former workers filed last week before the U.S. District Court for the NMI an amended computation of damages for their lost earnings and lost benefits.

The amended computation reflects that the former workers' total lost earnings and lost benefits was only \$424,272.40 as compared to their original

total demand of \$442,461.76.

With the inclusion of the \$50,000 each for mental anguish, plus the \$200,000 each in punitive damages, this brings the former workers' total demand to \$4,174,272.

The total original total demand was \$3,442,461.

The former workers filed their statement of damages following Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona's order directing them to provide the court with the exact amount of damages they are seeking against the owner and management of the Dynasty, Hong Kong (Overseas) Investment Ltd. and Mega Stars Overseas Ltd., respectively.

The hearing on the former workers' motion for a default judgment against HKE and Mega Stars was set for last Thursday.

At the hearing, after some discussion about the state of

the pleadings and supporting documents, Mok asked to continue the hearing.

Manglona granted the request and continued the hearing to March 14 at 9am.

Manglona ordered the plaintiffs to file a memorandum of law in support of the motion no later than March 7.

The 15 former employees are Eric F. Dona, Donny Rivera, Melinda Rivera, Chung-Liang Chiu, Shingo Kajiwara, Han Shao, Lorenzo Pacia III, Didith Pacia, Ming Yang Yuan, Chuan Hui Xu, Flordeliza F. Camiguina, Jovelyn F. Reyes, Richard Julio L. Reyes, Ernesto Y. Rivera, and Jose C. Cadion Jr. The compensatory damages for lost of earnings and lost benefits they are asking for range from \$20,878 to \$46,933.

Dona and co-plaintiffs recently asked the court to en-

ter a default judgment against HKE and Mega Stars.

Last August, U.S. District Court for the NMI designated Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood adopted Magistrate Judge Heather L. Kennedy's recommendation to enter a default judgment against HKE and Mega Stars.

In their lawsuit, Dona and co-plaintiffs alleged that HKE and Mega Stars lied to them that they were legally authorized to work despite the denial of their CW-1 petitions.

In February 2018, Chun Wai Chan, a corporate representative of both HKE and Mega Stars, informed the court that Tinian Dynasty's operation stopped in August 2015, and had not generated any income since the hotel halted operation in March 2016.

Chan also informed the court that they could not afford to pay for a private counsel in this case.

“The wind blew everything. I guess it was just too strong for the panels,” Yobei said, adding that everything was made sturdier by a certified electrician who has been contracted by his office.

“That’s why things took awhile. I believe all the electricians on island were busy with residential projects, so finally they had time to work on ours,” he said.

each, were finally delivered and assembled. All that remains is for CUC to hook them back up to the power grid.

“We can’t wait to bring the [Thursday] Street Market back because this is a community event and it would be nice to see it go up again,” he said. “We are almost there and...the electricians are already done with the panels. ...What is left is the installation.”

to increase further by the weekend as the tropical disturbance passes.

The tropical disturbance was located about 235 miles southeast of Kosrae at around 12pm yesterday and is the subject of a tropical cyclone formation alert by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center.

The disturbance is moving west at around 10 mph.

The disturbance is expected to continue moving westward through this week before turning west-northwest around Thursday. Slow development is expected over the next several days. This will cause the fresh to strong winds and

showery weather near Kosrae to spread.

Rainfall of 2 to 4 inches is likely across the region for the next few days.

If the disturbance develops faster than expected, stronger winds and larger rainfall amounts would be expected across Chuuk and Pohnpei.

Mary Joy Masongsong, 23; Jessme Jones, 17; Jan Zowie Cruz, 17; Pheona David; and Kat Johnson, 17.

The eight contestants will be going head to head for the title of Miss Earth Northern Marianas and the chance to represent the CNMI in the upcoming Miss Earth International pageant.

According to Apatang, this would be the first Miss Earth pageant to be held in the CNMI and he is excited about it because the pageant symbolizes something of importance to the islands, which is the environment.

“Today my role is pinning for Miss Earth candidates and this is the first one to ever happen here on Saipan and the thing is, it deals with...Earth and en-

vironment and this is what we are all about...so eventually the...candidates will be going around promoting this issue in schools,” he said.

Apatang said his office is helping to organize the event and will support the pageant logically with its president, Diana Clayton.

Exquisite Productions Marianas LLC vice president Rosalyn Ajoste said the pageant has been in the works for over a year and they are excited that it is finally happening.

Exquisite Productions Marianas aims to make the pageant an annual competition if it turns out well this first year.

“Guam has been doing this for years and it’s about time the CNMI jumps on board too,” she said.

BULK

From Page 1

director Gary P. Camacho disclosed that over 280 utility personnel, including from off-island, were involved in the restoration program on Saipan and Tinian.

GPA reportedly sent 41 power experts.

CUC's expenses for GPA personnel amounted to \$1.3 million last November, \$1.5 million last December, and \$2.3 million last January.

The CFO reports, which

was prepared by CUC's acting chief financial officer Corina Magofna, also show that rental for equipment reached \$1,106,166 and meals amounted to \$308,936.

The smallest expense was \$12,228, which was for the submersible pump installed at the former Mariana Resort & Spa in Marpi.

In the four-month period, the highest expense (\$4,299,298) was incurred last January.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is reimbursing CUC's typhoon-related expenses.

SECTION 902

From Page 1

munity,” Torres said.

In 2016, during the last Section 902 consultations, “we established the necessary policy framework for immigration and U.S. workforce development in the CNMI with our federal partners. We look forward to building on this as we continue our talks with the White House,” he added.

Torres’ other meetings are with the White House, Congress, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Office of Insular Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

On Thursday, Torres will meet with acting Interior secretary David Bernhardt and assistant secretary for Insular and International Affairs Douglas W. Domenech.

From Friday through Sunday, Torres and dozens of the nation’s governors will join leaders from business, the nonprofit sector and global governments for the National Governors Association’s annual winter meeting, a showcase for the best in governance and civic innovation and an opportunity for governors to learn from each other and from other luminaries.

The governors from the states and territories will lead and participate in discussions on topics such as child welfare, resiliency against disaster, education reform, entrepreneurship and more.

On Monday afternoon, Torres and the other territory governors will be at the White House for the 2019 senior plenary session of the Interagency Group on Insular Areas.

Torres will also meet with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) later that afternoon in his congressional office.

On Tuesday, Feb. 26, at the invitation of Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Torres and the other territorial governors will testify before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in a full committee hearing to examine the state of U.S. territories.

On Wednesday, Feb. 27, at the invitation of Sablan, Torres will testify before the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources in a hearing on H.R. 560, the Northern Mariana Islands Residents Relief Act, as well as on the impacts of the removal of the Philippines from the list of eligible countries for the H-2B worker visa program.

Torres is then scheduled to meet with officials at the Department of Defense later that afternoon. (PR)

MARKET

From Page 1

He noted that CUC had been prioritizing many local projects such as the replacement of wooden power poles with concrete poles.

According to Yobei, the two weatherheads that were ordered off-island, along with 12 panel boxes that had eight outlets

each, were finally delivered and assembled. All that remains is for CUC to hook them back up to the power grid.

“We can’t wait to bring the [Thursday] Street Market back because this is a community event and it would be nice to see it go up again,” he said. “We are almost there and...the electricians are already done with the panels. ...What is left is the installation.”

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WEATHER

From Page 1

be hazardous for small craft through the week. Seas will increase to hazardous levels.

Seas of 7 to 9 feet will increase to hazardous levels of 8 to 10 feet and are expected

to increase further by the weekend as the tropical disturbance passes.

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Bill would require gas stations to have free compressed air

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian) wants to require all gas stations in the CNMI to provide free compressed air, a gauge for measuring tire air pressure, and free water—as stated in Senate Bill 21-9 that he introduced.

The bill will be up for discussion in today's meeting of the Senate Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications Committee, together with S.B. 21-14, introduced by Sen. Sixto K. Igisomar (R-Saipan), to make sure the Commonwealth Utilities

Corp. won't overcharge their consumers for water usage after Super Typhoon Yutu.

S.B. 21-9 states that compressed air and water are essential services in order to make sure of the safe operation of motor vehicles. Gas stations generally provide these services but fail to maintain them and, when these equipment no longer work, many gas stations do not repair them.

"The availability and access to air and water services are necessary for the safety of motorists on the road, especially in emergencies. Therefore, the purpose of this act is to require all gas service stations to have

free compressed air and water," states S.B. 21-9.

Section 101 states that every CNMI gas station should provide free compressed air, a gauge for measuring tire air pressure, and water services to the public for use in their respective motor vehicles during hours of operation.

The CNMI Department of Commerce, in Section 102, would be required to have a customer complaint telephone hotline not later than five days after the bill is signed by the governor. Customers can report through the hotline any gas station that does not offer these free

services to the public.

DoC employees, upon inspection or notice of a complaint, are given the authority to investigate the customer's report and cite the gas station. They can also collect a \$250 fine for every valid complaint unless the citation

is challenged in court.

"No citation shall be issued if the air and water equipment are in good working order upon initial inspection, or if they are repaired to the satisfaction of the inspecting entity within 10 calendar days of the initial inspection."

No citation shall be issued if the service station can establish that the equipment has been the target of repeated vandalism. The vandalism must be substantiated with valid police reports. Provided, however, that the service station shall restore the required service within 10 calendar days of an inspection or the date of the vandalism incident."

Seabees' support comes to a close on Tinian

By CHIEF PETTY OFFICER
MATTHEW WHITE
30TH NAVAL CONSTRUCTION REGIMENT

SANTA RITA, Guam—Civilian and military dignitaries gathered on Tinian last Feb. 7 to offer praise and thanks to the Seabees for their efforts supporting the island following the devastation wrought by Super Typhoon Yutu in October 2018.

"To our men and women in uniform today, I salute you," said Tinian Mayor Edwin Alldan. "In rebuilding our homes, you have helped restore certainty in our community and the confidence that we need to keep moving forward."

Seabees from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 1 and NMCB 3, alongside other units from the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command region, repaired 184 roofs, installed 196 temporary tents for families whose homes were damaged and uninhabitable immediately following the typhoon, produced more than 54,000 gallons of potable drinking water, cleared debris from 64 miles of road, and translocated 10,036 cubic yards of debris.

"As the storm passed over the island, we had prepared and we know that you had prepared as you always do for these storms," said Rear Adm. Shoshana Chatfield, commander, Joint Region Marianas. "The devastation here had struck me so profoundly, and the survivors of this storm have been on my mind every day since then. It has been a great honor of mine to lead the Department of Defense mission here."

The Seabees deployed to Tinian immediately following Super Typhoon Yutu to support the Defense Support of Civil Authorities and Federal Emergency Management Agency mission following Yutu, which was the second-strongest storm to hit a U.S. territory in recorded history.



Steelworker 3rd Class Justin Panelo and Builder 3rd Class Jacob Gillam, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3, Det. Tinian, cut down a displaced tree on top of a home that was damaged during Super Typhoon Yutu.

U.S. NAVY/MANUEL TORRES

They were part of Task Force-West, which was the Indo-Pacific Command response to Yutu, initially divided into Task Group Tinian and Task Group Saipan, eventually rolled into Task Group Engineer and included units from the Navy, Marines, Air Force, Army, and Coast Guard.

"Without our Department of Defense and the many components of it and FEMA, these islands would have not been able to recover in the short period of time that we have," said CNMI Lt. Gov. Arnold Palacios. "So you have in this corner of the nation, in this Commonwealth, a grateful community, a really grateful community. To all the men and women in FEMA and all the branches of the Department of Defense who were here to help us pick up our lives, are we back to normalcy? No. But we are almost there and it is because of your hard work every day, day in and day out," Palacios added.

"Know this that you have a grateful American community [on] Tinian and Saipan and the rest of the Commonwealth. Not only are we grateful, but we are proud of our Department of Defense. We are very proud of

every man and woman in our Department of Defense. Now, we really see what our Department of Defense is all about. Thank you very much. Thank you for everything that you've done for us."

With the close of Department of Defense support to DSCA, FEMA and civilian authorities will continue to provide support to essential services on Tinian and Saipan.

"It has been an honor for the U.S. military to serve our brothers and sisters in the CNMI to support civil and local authorities as they continue recovery efforts in the wake of Typhoon Yutu," said Chatfield. "Service members from Joint Region Marianas and Indo-Pacific Command worked with FEMA and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands' civil and local officials to deliver water, fuel, housing, transportation, medical support, electricity and food across the affected regions in Guam and the Marianas Islands. Going forward, the DoD remains ready to support FEMA and local and civilian authorities as needed with forces in Joint Region Marianas."

Free OSHA trainings

The CNMI Department of Labor is inviting all interested individuals to attend free Occupational Safety and Health Administration training classes starting today, Feb. 19, 2019.

The classes will be taught

by OSHA-authorized instructors from the University of California, San Diego. The training team will share their experience and knowledge on topics such as fall protection and demolition hazards as well as provide information on federal and state safety and health regulations.

The training will take place at the Marianas Base Camp in Marpi, formerly the Mariana Resort & Spa, unless otherwise noted. See schedule of classes below for more information.

■ Feb. 19, 2019, 9am - 11:30am

Topic: Electrical/Electrocution Hazards during Typhoon Clean-Up Operations

■ Feb. 26, 2019, 9am - 11:30am

Topic: Fall Protection during Typhoon Clean-Up Operations

■ Feb. 27, 2019, 9am - 11:30am

Topic: Demolition Hazards during Typhoon Clean-Up Operations

To register for a seat or request more information, con-

tact the CNMI DOL's OSHA Consultation Program at 664-3154/5/6/7 or email the following OSHA consultants:

■ Elaine Pangelinan: elaine.pangelinan@gmail.com

■ Sidney Camacho: scamachodolosha@gmail.com

■ Wallace Chong: wchongdolosha@gmail.com

"The safety of all employees is a primary concern and the timing of these training courses is perfect because most of us are involved with the typhoon recovery efforts and the rebuilding of homes and business," Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente said.

The trainings are open to the public. Those involved in post-typhoon debris cleanup and removal, employed in the construction industry, or work in high-risk occupations are encouraged to attend. Seating is limited, and will be on a first-come, first-served basis. (PR)



**Department of Veterans Affairs
VISIT TO SAIPAN, TINIAN, AND ROTA**

AVA Benefits Counselor will be in CNMI

Saipan

Place: CNMI Military/Veterans Affairs Office
Date: Tuesday - February 19, 2019
Time: 9am to 4pm

Tinian

Place: Mayor's Office
Date: Wednesday - February 20, 2019
Time: 8am to 3pm

Rota

Place: Mayor's Office, Conference Hall
Date: Thursday - February 21, 2019
Time: 9am to 3:30pm



The Benefits Counselor will be available to answer benefits questions, and assist with the claim process.



Docomo gives \$200K worth of laptops to PSS

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinaires@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A telecommunications company in the Commonwealth gave the Public School System about \$200,000 over the weekend that will be used to provide PSS libraries with laptops.

Docomo Pacific CNMI donated the funds to support PSS' 21st Century Library Initiative. The money will be used to provide 10 laptops to each of all 20 PSS libraries in the CNMI.

"I [believe] it was a good fit," said Docomo Pacific CNMI general manager and vice president Dino Manning.

He said this is because Docomo Pacific is a technology company and the donation ensures that it will not only support PSS but also makes sure that the funding is aligned with what Docomo Pacific does.

Yvonne Panglinan, PSS associate commissioner for student and support services, noted that the collaboration with Docomo Pacific CNMI involved talks that lasted about a year.

"We explored increasing bandwidth, we explored e-books to increase the library but, in the end, with the feedback of the school librarians,



ERWIN ENCINARES

Docomo Pacific CNMI general manager and vice president Dino Manning poses with Public School associate commissioner Yvonne Panglinan and Kagman High School students and staff last Friday.

we came up with an infusion of technology so that our students would be able to have more technology in their library as resources," said Panglinan.

The donation was coupled with a media event at the Kagman High School, where school

principal Leila Staffler noted that the laptops will provide access to the whole world for those who have not left the islands.

"Through the internet and through the services that this entire company provides... for some students who may

have never even left the island, it gives them a window to spaces that they might not get a chance to see in person,"

she said.

This could pique a student's curiosity and push them to venture out and "go further

than they are at this moment," Staffler said. "It also allows them to stay connected to their roots and their home."

Japan Club of Guam to host annual fair

The Japan Club of Guam will host the 21st Arts and Crafts Fair with the theme of *hikari* (brilliance) at the Hotel Nikko Guam's Tasi Ballroom on March 3, 2019.

The main purpose of this event is to strengthen the friendship between the communities of Japan and Guam by sharing the unique Japanese culture of arts and crafts with the people of Guam.

The Consulate-General of Japan will host a demonstration of the ancient Japanese tea ceremony.

"It will be an excellent opportunity to experience this tea ceremony because even in Japan, we seldom have occasions to experience this ancient tea ceremony," said the consulate in a statement. "All day during this fair, they will also serve you tea, prepared with this special, ancient technique, along with Japanese sweets. Everyone is welcome to taste the special tea and experience this elegant ceremony."

There will be several performers from Japan. "We are especially grateful that Mr. Kuga and his Tokyo students will return to play several songs" with the *taisho-koto* (a modernized version of the Japanese traditional harp), added the statement. "They will fill this fair with their cheerful music. They will open their booth for you to try



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Japan Club of Guam will host the 21st Arts and Crafts Fair at the Hotel Nikko Guam's Tasi Ballroom on March 3, 2019.

playing this unique and simple musical instrument."

There will be a traditional Japanese dance performance. The instructor, Yaeko Smith, has been studying under a prestigious master in Japan for many years. Smith received the honorable name of "Wakaya-gi" from the traditional dance authorities of the same name.

Dancers, from Kindergarteners to adults, will perform various kinds of traditional Japanese dance on the stage.

Aikido is a martial art that does not have any competitions. It trains your mind and spirit as well as your body. Aikikai (Aikido school) will demonstrate various techniques and rituals by all students.

This year, we will have a special chorus group from Notre Dame High School.



BEST ISLAND TRAVEL DESTINATION

The Marianas was awarded Best Island Travel Destination at the 2018 National Tourism Fashion Awards in Beijing, China, on Jan. 22, 2019.



CASH FOR COLLEGE

About 300 college-bound students participated at Northern Marianas College's recent Cash for College workshops on Saipan and Rota. NMC staff members and volunteers provided free, one-on-one financial aid assistance to new and current students. The next Cash for College workshop was held on Tinian last Feb. 12, 2019. NMC's Financial Aid Office can still help you find money for college. Contact the financial aid staff at 237-6792 or email daisy.propst@marianas.edu.

LIBRARY HAPPENING:

Beginner ukulele class

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library registration for Beginner Ukulele Class is ongoing at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. The age range is children ages 8 years or older and adults. The total cost for 8 class sessions is \$50. Ukulele classes are held at Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in partnership with ukulele instructor Larry Lee and children. Session is set to begin on Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019, from 4pm to 5pm.

The JKPL ukulele class is based on "first come; first paid." Students must provide their own ukuleles and a folder to hold music sheets (plastic sheet protectors and a three-ring binder are recommended). Parents/guardians must sign a liability waiver form on behalf of their participating children and must adhere to public library policies and procedures.

For questions regarding ukulele class, call Celina Foreman or Victoria Cabrera at 235-7315 / 7322 during regular library hours.

Class dates are subject to change, unless otherwise specified. Students that have received a ukulele scholarship are able to take advantage of the ukulele class.

For the latest library news and events, visit www.cnmilib.org or like/visit Joeten Kiyu on Facebook.

The library's regular hours of operation are as follows: Tuesday-Friday (10am to 6pm), Saturday (9am to 4pm); Sundays, Mondays, and holidays closed.

Programs and activities are sponsored by the Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, and are made possible by IMLS Grant # LSTA LS-

00-18-0052-18 and IMLS Grant # LSTA LS-01-18-0058-18. (PR)

Secret science of ice cream

Last Jan. 26, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library hosted an exciting science activity in which participants were able to make ice cream—the secret science of ice cream!

The participants first learned about the ingredients that make up ice cream, and how each ingredient affects the whole recipe. Participants also learned the science behind ice cream making. Finally, each participant was able to make their own ice cream in a bag! After the ice cream was topped with chocolate sauce, the participants enjoyed eating their sweet treat!

A big thank you to all who participated, and everyone who helped make this program possible. We will be making ice cream again at our February KidzCamp! We look forward to sharing this program with the community again!

For the latest news and events, visit the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's website, www.cnmilib.org and like and/or follow JKPL's Facebook page, @joeten kiyu. Follow the library on Instagram @joetenkiyu and Pinterest @Joeten Kiyu.

Programs and activities are sponsored by the Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, and are made possible by IMLS Grant # LSTA LS-

00-18-0052-18 and IMLS Grant # LSTA LS-01-18-0058-18. (PR)

Adult/teen/tween JKPL February events

■ Friday, Feb. 22: Do you like dessert? Sign up for our

free Baking Basics, from 3:30pm-4:30pm! We will learn how to make a delicious treat, and a library card clear of fines is required to participate. Class is geared toward ages 10 and up. Children ages 10-12 must be accompanied

by an adult.

■ Saturday, Feb. 23: The Great Stories Club will be meeting on Saturday, Feb. 23, from 12pm to 1pm! We will be going through the book Kindred: A Graphic Novel Adaptation by Damian Duffy

and John Jennings. We are restarting our sign up. If you are interested in reading a great book, receiving free books along with a special prize, sign up at the Reference Desk! Please note the book is now open to grades 6th-12th.

PTO STAFF OF THE YEAR

The 2019 State Pupil Transportation Staff of the Year, Saipan's Arnel Ermitanio, second left, front row, is flanked by finalists, Rota's Rhysanne Hizon, left, front row, and Tinian's Renato Benghit, second right, front row. Education Commissioner Glenn Mu'Na, second left, back row, and Board of Education chair Janice Marie A. Tenorio, extreme right, front row, led the presentation of awards last Saturday at the Pacific Islands Club Saipan, which was one of the highlights of the Pupil Transportation Week celebration of the Public School System.

PSS



**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB 19-BECQ/DEQ-052**

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 06, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "I" 2018 OR NEWER SUV, 4-DOORS,
AWD FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL COASTAL QUALITY,
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAM
DIRECTOR, PROC. & SUPPLY

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB 19-OVR-050**

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 06, 2019 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

**"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "F" PICK-UP TRUCK,
4WD, FOUR-FULL-DOORS FOR THE OFFICE
OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ARLENE KAY A. YAMAGATA
DIRECTOR OF OVR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAM
DIRECTOR OF P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP19-BECQ/DCRM-051**

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 06, 2019 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

**"DEVELOPMENT OF A LAOLAO BAY WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE BUREAU OF
ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY,
DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO MR. DAVID BENEVENTE AT dbenavente@dcrm.gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, FEBRUARY 22, 2019.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAM
DIRECTOR, PROC. & SUPPLY

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP19-JUDICIARY-053**

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 08, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"CARPET REMOVAL AND TILE AND CARPET INSTALLATION
FOR THE GUMA' HUSTISA, IIMWAL AWEWE, HOUSE OF
JUSTICE SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS.
A PROJECT UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS MUST BE IN WRITING TO GERALD E. WEAVER VIA EMAIL TO gerald.weaver@justice.gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS FEBRUARY 28, 2019. THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED WITHIN THREE (3) BUSINESS DAYS AND WILL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROPOSERS.

A PRE-PROPOSAL SITE VISIT WILL BE HELD ON **MARCH 01, 2019 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME** AT THE FRONT ENTRANCE OF THE GUMA' HUSTISA. BUILDING SUPERINTENDENT GERALD E. WEAVER WILL WALK THROUGH THE ROOMS AND AREAS THAT NEED REMOVAL OF CARPET AND INSTALLATION OF TILES AND CARPET.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ LARRISA C. LARSON
SECRETARY OF FINANCE

/S/ JOSEPH A. TUDELA
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

/S/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
CHIEF JUSTICE

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP19-CHCC/H.O.M.E. VISITING-009**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: February 25, 2019 • TIME: 09:00AM

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT
H.O.M.E VISITING
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION**

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKET MAY BE PICKED-UP AT CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ PRISCILLA M. IAKOPO
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Commonwealth Judiciary Administrative Office
Guma' Hustisa, Iimwal Awewe, House of Justice
P.O. Box 20165, Saipan MP 96950
Telephone (670) 236-9770**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB 19-JUDICIARY-01**

SUBMISSION DATE: February 28, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"NEW 2019-2020 VEHICLES
(5 Door All Wheel Drive Utility Vehicle)"**

The Commonwealth Judiciary ("Judiciary") is soliciting invitation for bids for new 2019-2020 vehicles (5 Door All Wheel Drive Utility Vehicle).

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE CASHIER WINDOW, WINDOW #1, LOCATED AT THE FRONT OF GUMA' HUSTISA / IIMWAL AWEEWE / HOUSE OF JUSTICE, SUSIPE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAIC SECTIONS 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
JUDICIARY EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY

/S/ JOHN T. VILLAGOMEZ
JUDICIARY PROCUREMENT OFFICER

Free ANA grant workshop

The Administration for Native Americans, through its Pacific Region Training and Technical Assistance provider in Hawai'i, Ka'ānani'au LLC, is offering a free one-day workshop, Pre-Application Training, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan on Feb. 20, 2019, from 8am to 4pm, to help participants write an ANA grant for the next cycle.

This is the second of two sections. ANA Pre-Application Training is designed to help you

apply for a grant from the Administration for Native Americans. We'll go over the details of what reviewers are looking for in your grant applications, dissect the most recently published Funding Opportunity Announcements, and teach you tips for standing out from the mass of grant applications.

Come to this training with a project idea already in mind. If you aren't quite there yet, consider attending our Project Planning & Development

training first. The PPD training usually takes place in the fall of each year.

The class will be led by Susan White, CFO/founder of Ka'ānani'au LLC. This year, Manny Borja and Emma Perez will be joining White to teach the class.

White is the owner of ACKCO, Inc. (ackco.org), one of the nation's largest and most successful providers of services to Native American tribes and communities and

a minority shareholder of Ka'ānani'au LLC.

White has 30-plus years' experience in the field of financial management and has been instrumental in crafting policies and operations at the U.S. federal level in regards to Native American and Pacific Islander housing, energy, economic development and more. She has a proven track record of providing successful contract oversight and administration, as well as providing

monitoring, on-site training, and technical assistance to organizations and programs in the areas of comprehensive planning, resource development, organizational development, financial management, staff development, administrative operating policies and procedures and economic development.

Borja is a longtime ANA technical assistance consultant and co-author of *Directory of Traditional Healers and Medicinal Plants in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Estreyas Marianas Chamorro*. He has been part of ANA grant writing teams here in the CNMI,

most recently for the Carolinian Affairs Office.

Perez is 500 Sails co-founder and MANGO pro tem treasurer and has 30-plus years of nonprofit finance experience. She has acted as the financial member of successful grant writing teams for a multitude of funders. She was part of the ANA grant writing teams here in the CNMI for both 500 Sails and the Carolinian Affairs Office that were awarded a total of \$1,026,191 since 2016.

Although you may come as a walk-in, to prepare enough materials, participants on all three islands are encouraged to register online at <https://tinyurl.com/ANA-Pre-Ap-Saipan>. (PR)



2 Guam Guard airmen are deployed

Airman First Class Keith Lujan, from the 254th Force Support Squadron, and Airman First Class Christopher Camacho, from the 254th Security Forces Squadron, at center, are pictured with Guam National Guard leadership at the Guam International Airport Authority, last Feb. 8, 2019, just prior to departing for a deployment in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Southwest Asia. From left to right are Maj. Veronica Reyes, commander, 254FSS; Lt. Col. Esther Aguigui, The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard; Airman 1st Class Keith Lujan; Airman 1st Class Christopher Camacho; Col. Graham Botha, commander, 254th Air Base Group; Capt. Jason Cruz, acting commander, 254SFS.

Two airmen, from the Guam Air National Guard's 254th Force Support Squadron and the 254th Security Forces Squadron, departed in the early morning hours of Feb. 8 en route to a deployment in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Southwest Asia.

Airman First Class Keith Lujan, an FSS airman, is tasked with enhancing combat-readiness by providing worldwide agile combat sup-

port and community services by delivering superior morale, welfare, recreation, manpower and personnel programs services.

AFC Christopher Camacho, an SFS airman, is tasked with the protection of federal property from hazards such as sabotage, espionage, trespass, theft, fire, and accident or willful damage and destruction, to maintain law and order, preserve the peace, and protect life

and civil rights within the U.S. Central Command Theater of Operations in order to engineer combat power and establish and sustain combat platforms.

"The Guard asks the public for their continued support of our airmen and their families," said Lt. Col. Esther Aguigui, The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. "We also have airmen from the 254th Air Base Group, the 254th Security Forces Squad-

ron, and the 254th Force Support Squadron who are currently deployed or supporting missions around the world. Please keep them and these airmen in your thoughts and prayers now as they prepare to deploy and for the duration of their deployment."

A couple more airmen are scheduled to leave in the next few weeks and are scheduled to be deployed for approximately six months. (PR)



Another Guam Guard airman is deployed

Technical Sgt. John Patricio, from the 254th Air Base Group, at center, is pictured with Guam National Guard leadership at the Guam International Airport Authority just prior to departing for a deployment in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Southwest Asia last Feb. 13. From left, Lt. Col. Anthony San Nicolas, deputy commander, 254ABG; Col. Tim Puzan, director of Air Staff; 1st Lt. Tommy Rivera, officer-in-charge, 254th Cyber Flight; Lt. Col. Esther Aguigui, The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard; Tech. Sgt. Patricio; Brig. Gen. Johnny Lizama, assistant adjutant general - Air, Guam National Guard; Col. Graham Botha, commander, 254th Air Base Group; and Chief Master Sgt. John Quinata, command chief, Guam Air National Guard.

Another airman from the Guam Air National Guard's 254th Air Base Group departed for a deployment last Feb. 13, 2019, in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Southwest Asia.

Technical Sgt. John Patricio will be supporting a Cyber Flight mission to pro-

vide quality communication systems and services to its units worldwide, to include equipping, administering, training and providing personnel to operate and maintain good ground communications, electronics and computer systems and facilities. He will be deployed for approximately six months.

"The Guard asks the public for their continued support of our airmen and their families," said Lt. Col. Esther Aguigui, The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. "We also have airmen from the 254th Air Base Group, the 254th

Security Forces Squadron, and the 254th Force Support Squadron who are currently deployed or supporting missions around the world. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers now as they prepare to deploy and for the duration of their deployment." (PR)

Rai Middle Road

- Water well(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: None
- Pole replacement(s): Six

■ Sunday, Feb. 24 – 8am to 6pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 3 distribution circuit
- Village location: Gualo Rai
- Area(s) affected: Gualo Rai
- Water well(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: S-10, S-11 and S-12
- Pole replacement(s): Eight

■ Wednesday Feb. 20 – 8am to 4pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 3 distribution circuit
- Village location: Chalan Laulau
- Area(s) affected: Chalan Lau Lau and Gualo Rai
- Water well(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: None
- Pole replacement(s): Six

■ Monday, Feb. 25 – 8am to 6pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 3 distribution circuit
- Village location: Gualo Rai
- Area(s) affected: Gualo Rai Middle Road
- Water well(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: None
- Pole replacement(s): Six

■ Thursday, Feb. 21 – 8am to 6pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 3 distribution circuit
- Village location: Gualo Rai
- Area(s) affected: Gualo Rai Middle Road
- Water well(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: GR-1
- Pole Replacement(s): 5
- Conductor removal: 10 spans

■ Friday, Feb. 22 – 8am to 6pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 3 distribution circuit
- Village location: Gualo Rai
- Area(s) affected: Gualo Rai Middle Road
- Water well(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: GR-1
- Pole Replacement(s): 5
- Conductor removal: 10 spans

■ Saturday, Feb. 23 – 8am to 6pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Kiya 3 distribution circuit
- Village location: Gualo Rai
- Area(s) affected: Gualo Rai
- Water well(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: GR-1
- Pole Replacement(s): 5
- Conductor removal: 10 spans

The purpose of the emergency power and water interruptions is to de-energize utility lines and allow power line workers from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. contracting company, Primary Source Electric, to safely replace wooden poles with concrete poles along Beach Road, Garapan, Chalan Laulau, and Gualo Rai villages. The emergency power interruptions are part of CUC's resiliency program aimed at hardening and strengthening the power distribution system that was affected by Super Typhoon Yutu.

Because of the scale of work that will be performed, CUC asks travelers to take alternate routes or to exercise caution when driving through the working area.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Call Center (664-4282) or monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). (PR)

USCG, authorities respond to vessel taking on water in American Samoa

HONOLULU—The U.S. Coast Guard and American Samoa authorities are responding to a report of a passenger-ferry taking on water in Pago Pago last Saturday.

Members of the Coast Guard Marine Safety Detach-

ment are working with American Samoa authorities and salvors to address the situation. The vessel is currently moored to the main pier and attended by a tugboat.

"This is unexpected and unfortunate," said Cmdr. Patrick

Gallagher, chief of response for Sector Honolulu. "Our mission is to protect people and the environment. No one was aboard the vessel and containment boom has been deployed to address any sheen as work continues to stabilize the vessel

and remedy the situation."

At 1:30pm Saturday, Sector Honolulu watchstanders received a report that the vessel *Sili* was taking on water at the main pier in Pago Pago. MSD American Samoa personnel responded alongside local

authorities and members of SOLAR, an oil spill response organization. They deployed a containment boom around the vessel.

All compartments are sealed, and power is secured. There are no passengers or

crew aboard. The maximum pollution potential is reportedly 9,000 gallons of diesel fuel and 2,000 gallons of lube oil. There is no effect from the weather at this time. The cause of the flooding is under investigation. (USCG)

Hotel association donates \$1K to man'amko

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands has donated \$1,000 to the Man'amko Center of the Office on Aging in Garapan in lieu of the association's annual luncheon for the elderly.

According to HANMI chair Gloria Cavanagh, HANMI decided to reserve \$1,000 for the man'amko in place of their annual Thanksgiving meals that they host for the elderly.

"We try to reserve \$1,000 so we can do a donation to the Man'amko Center. We used to do the feedings for Thanksgiving and there were

so many organizations that jumped on board and were doing Thanksgiving meals for the man'amko. So, we decided this year that we would just give them money and let them decide because they have so many other expenses like their bingo and other kinds of activities that they do, so it's just extra money they can use to buy prizes and things they need so we reserved the money for them," she said.

Cavanagh said it's HANMI's way of showing gratitude to the elderly who paved the way and made the CNMI what it is today.

"It's just to thank our man'amko. They make sure

we're grounded, that we remember why we're all doing this, family values, and they are a big part of where we are today so this is just a 'thank you,'" she said.

Cavanagh said that HANMI will be donating more to other groups following the donation to the Man'amko Center.

"Our golf tournament will be in a few months. The date isn't set yet but as we get closer to that date, we will also do donations to other places," she said.

Members of the Hotel Association in the Northern Mariana Islands donate \$1,000 to the Man'amko Center last Friday.

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA



STUDENT EXCHANGE

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

The University of Guam signs a five-year memorandum of understanding with Nakamura Gakuen University to promote student exchange between the universities in pursuit of academic, language, and cultural enrichment. From left, University of Guam president Thomas W. Krise and Nakamura Gakuen University president Satoshi Kai sign the MOU last Feb. 11. Nakamura Gakuen University is a junior college, university, and graduate school in Fukuoka, Japan, that offers studies in nutrition, English, early childhood and elementary education, and business.

MIFICPA to host tax seminar

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants, or MIFICPA, invites the public to this year's tax seminar on March 2, 2019, from 8am to 12pm, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. This year's seminar will focus on tax updates for 2018/2019, changes in tax laws and tax filing requirements, among others.

The seminar will be conducted by David J. Burger, CPA, the managing partner of Burger, Comer & Magliari.

The registration fee for members is \$25, inclusive of membership fee, snacks and certificate of attendance. Non-members and non-accountants are also welcome for the same fee. Registration starts at 7:30am.

To facilitate the question-and-answer portion of the seminar, you can pre-register and turn in your question(s) ahead of time through the organizers.

Sign up now. For reservation and more details, call or email:

- Angie Mamaril at 783-1857 (angiehmamaril@yahoo.com)
- Lois Manese at 286-8663 (eloisa_manese@yahoo.com)
- Cris Bucalig at 287-0945 (cris_bong@yahoo.com)
- Rose Badidoy at 588 0425 (roseannbadidoy@yahoo.com)
- Butch Ordas at 789-9276 (butchordas@yahoo.com)
- Gloria Balila at mgmabalila@yahoo.com
- Paul Saniel (paulangelosaniel@yahoo.com)
- Yho Villavicencio at 285-9017 (yhobowl300@gmail.com) (PR)

USCIS strengthens guidance on child brides

» Guidance clarifies agency requirements for petition

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced last week that it is publishing guidance for its officers to consider when adjudicating spousal petitions involving minors.

The guidance, published as an update to the USCIS Adjudicator's Field Manual, clarifies age requirements for a petitioner filing an Affidavit of Support for a spouse in conjunction with a concurrently filed I-485, and identifies factors officers should consider when adjudicating a Form I-130 spousal petition involving a minor.

"USCIS is taking action to the maximum extent permitted under current immigration law to highlight special considerations in the adjudication of marriage-based immigrant

petitions involving a minor," said USCIS director L. Francis Cissna. "Our updated guidance complements the flagging system USCIS created to identify minor spouses. While these are steps in the right direction, ultimately it is up to Congress to bring more certainty and legal clarity to this process for both petitioners and USCIS officers."

While there are no statutory age requirements to petition for a spouse or be sponsored as a spousal beneficiary, USCIS will consider whether the age of the beneficiary or petitioner at the time the marriage was celebrated violates the law of the place of celebration and is recognized as valid or violates the public policy of the state where the couple resides or plans to reside. In some U.S.

states and in some foreign countries, marriage involving a minor might be permitted under certain circumstances, including where there is parental consent, a judicial order, emancipation of the minor, or pregnancy of the minor.

The updated guidance stresses to adjudicators that marriages involving a minor warrant special attention. When considering a petition, USCIS officers should ensure that:

- The marriage was lawful in the place it was celebrated;
- If the couple resides outside the place of celebration, the marriage is recognized as valid in the U.S. state where the couple currently resides or will presumably reside and does not violate the state of residence's public policy, and;

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Lane closed for Bubble Color Run

The southbound lane along Beach Road will be closed on Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019, from 4am to 8am for the Triple J 5K 2019 race for runner's safety. Start point is behind Garapan Farmer's Market to proceed south. Turn-around point is 2.5km past the Quartermaster Intersection at Blue Beach House Hotel. (PR)

Military training at Farallon de Medinilla

ASAN, GUAM—The U.S. military will conduct training on Feb. 18-22 at the island of Farallon de Medinilla, from 8am to 7pm.

It is recommended the public, fishermen and marine tour operators monitor the Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be in a 12-nautical mile radius of the island. (PR)

Chamoru commission meetings

The Kumisiōn i Fino' CHamoru yan i Fina'nā'guen i Historia

yan i Lina'la' i Taotao Tāno' (Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam) will hold a special meeting on Feb. 21, 2019, Thursday, from 12:30pm to 1:30pm. The meeting will take place in the former Guam Museum building or the Garden House in Hagåtña. Agenda items are approval of Feb. 14, 2019, minutes and discussion of proposed press conference. Work session will follow.

For more information, contact Kumisiōn chair/Gé'helo' Hope Alvarez Cristobal at 483-0097 or secretary/Sikritāria Rosa Salas Palomo at 727-5522. (PR)

Xavier High School entrance exam

Xavier High School in the Federated States of Micronesia will be conducting its entrance exam here on Saipan on Feb. 23, Saturday, at Mt. Carmel School. The exam, open to all seventh and eighth graders, will be held from 8:15am to 11:30am. For more information, call or text Friends of Xavier-CNMI president Ivan A. Blanco at 2858768. (PR)

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Parkland plus 365: One year later, and America's still addicted to guns

Another day, another anniversary, another bitter reflection on a year in which far too little changed in America's deadly and dysfunctional relationship with firearms.

It was last Feb. 14 that a teenage gunman used high-powered weaponry—the same legal-almost-anywhere AR-15 that's become standard equipment for mass killers—to murder 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. And wound another 17. And traumatize countless more.

As the nation that had endured the horror of Sandy Hook Elementary, the carnage of the Las Vegas Strip, the cutting down of church worshippers in bunches, absorbed another body blow, there was briefly a belief that this time might be different.

In a bipartisan meeting with congressional leaders, President Trump boasted in front of cameras that he could, would, take on the National Rifle Association. He wanted tougher background checks on gun sales, believed in seizing guns from mentally disturbed people. He would push to eliminate "bump-stock" devices that turn semi-automatic rifles into de facto automatic ones, plus support age limits for buying rifles.

Days later—after a closed-door White House meeting with the NRA—Trump abandoned all but the bump-stock tweak.

It's not as if any of the ideas floated on the federal level were out of left field. In the massacre's wake, Republican then-Gov. Rick Scott and a conservative GOP legislature passed a 21-year-old age restriction for rifle ownership, imposed a three-day waiting period for gun purchases and expanded the power of the police to seize guns from persons deemed a threat.

In other words, they finally swallowed some sanity, as did a few other states.

Meanwhile, the uniquely American carnage continues.

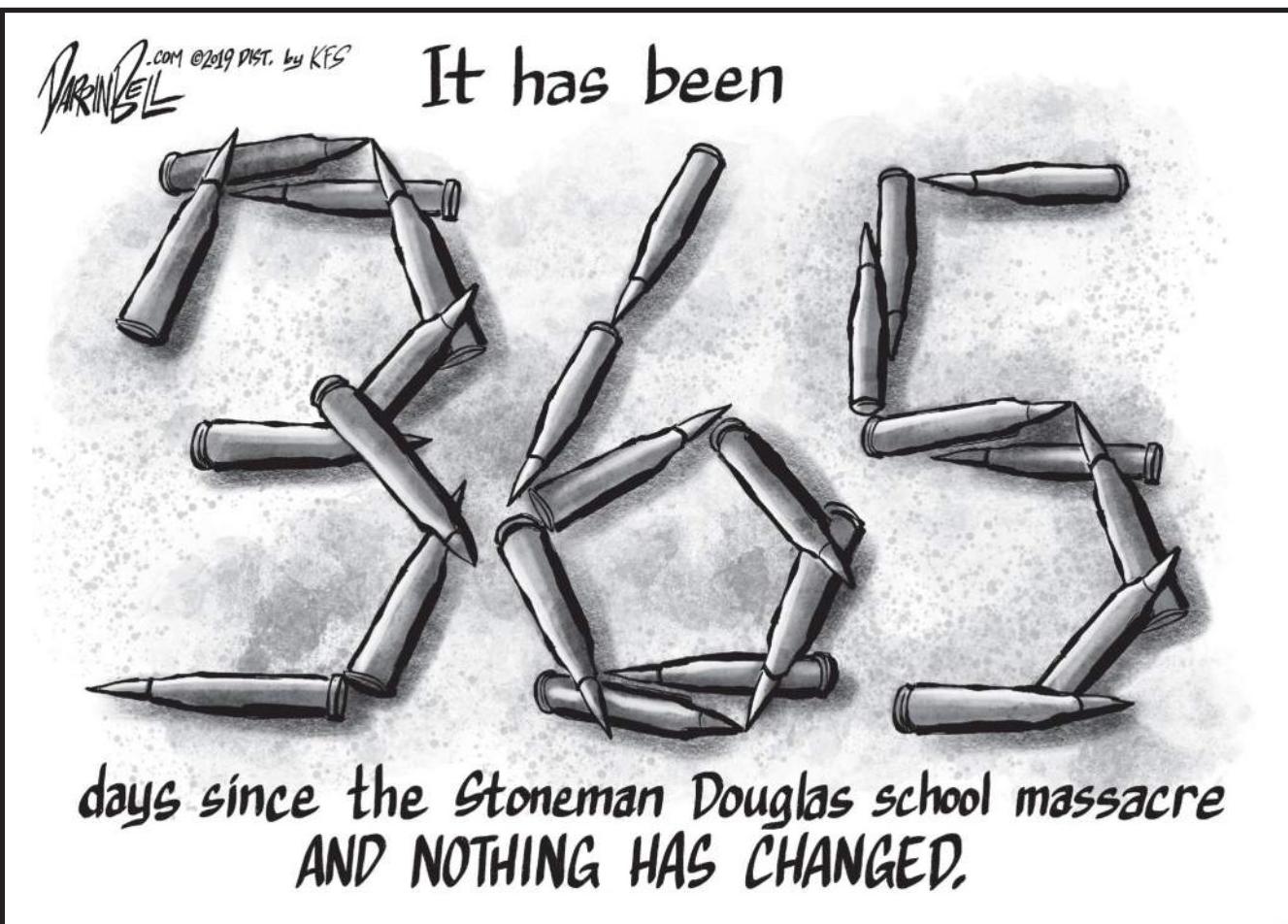
Firearm deaths are on the rise, says the Centers for the Disease Control; the latest totals show them at their highest level in nearly a half century.

Kids are in crosshairs. The online news organization The Trace, with the help of student journalists, spotlighted the loss of 1,200 young people killed by guns since Parkland.

If there was one bit of possible good news on guns in the past year, it's the level of civic engagement from scarred teenagers, including Parkland survivors like David Hogg, Emma Gonzalez and Cameron Kasky. They took to the streets and social media platforms. Thanks in part to their fearless advocacy and November's election result, there is at least one part of the federal government openly discussing how to address the gun madness.

So low are expectations in Washington, candor and conversation count as progress.

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Regulate Facebook and Twitter? The case is getting stronger

The U.S. government should not regulate social media. It should stay far away from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and the rest. Any regulatory effort might well violate the First Amendment. Even if it turned out to be constitutional, it would squelch creativity and innovation in the very places where they are most needed.

Until recently, I would have endorsed every sentence in the above paragraph. But as Baron Bramwell, the English judge, once put it, "The matter does not appear to me now as it appears to have appeared to me then."

The argument for targeted forms of federal regulation, respectful of the First Amendment, might not yet be decisive—but it is getting stronger every day.

The first reason, and the most fundamental, involves democracy itself. Everyone now knows that foreign governments, most notably Russia, have been using social media aggressively to promote their interests.

Before the 2016 election, Russian agents worked hard to divide Americans and influence their votes. They succeeded in reaching 126 million Facebook users—and they published more than 131,000 messages on Twitter.

Whatever the impact of Russia's efforts, foreign interference with the operations of our democracy is intolerable. Because other nations, and not only Russia, have a lot to gain and growing technological capabilities, the problem is likely to get worse.

True, social media can act on its own to reduce the problem. Facebook has taken down hundreds of pages linked to Russian propaganda efforts, and there is some evidence that its corrective measures are succeeding.

But because the stakes are so high, federal regulation is not hard to justify. And while foreign interference is the most obvious problem, it is worth starting to explore what, if anything, to do about all uses of "dirty tricks" on social media—as, for example, through the creation of fake pages and accounts to spread known falsehoods to achieve electoral goals.

The second problem involves consumer protection. In view of recent abuses, it is worth considering whether to adopt some kind of user's bill of rights, designed to protect against unwanted or unknowing disclosure of personal data. Prominent social media platforms already tell users how their information might be used, but those disclosures are not exactly transparent.

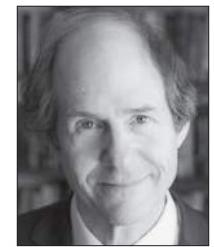
The third problem involves the antitrust laws. Is Facebook a kind of monopoly? If so, should it be regulated as what economists call a "natural monopoly," which exists when the market can efficiently support only one supplier (as in the case of electric utility providers)?

These are hardly simple questions, and they are complicated by the fact that Facebook does not charge its users. But the sheer

By CASS R. SUNSTEIN

Bloomberg News

Cass R. Sunstein is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is the author of *The Cost-Benefit Revolution* and a co-author of *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness*.



size of the platform—increased by Facebook's acquisition of Instagram and WhatsApp—means that regulators need to consider, more carefully than they have done thus far, how antitrust law might apply to situations that were once unimaginable.

In some ways, the rise of social media is analogous to the rise of radio and television, which inspired the original creation of the Federal Communications Commission in 1934. Importantly, the FCC was established as an "independent" agency.

That means unlike the heads of Cabinet departments, its five members are not supposed to be subject to the day-to-day control of the White House. Nor can they be fired simply because the president disagrees with their decisions as a matter of policy.

With respect to communications, a degree of independence makes sense. It would be dangerous if any president could grant broadcast licenses to his friends and deny them to his enemies—or if he could oversee regulatory decisions involving companies that offer information, and points of view, whose dissemination he might abhor.

These points justify a firm conclusion: If federal officials are going to regulate social media, they should be independent of the president. The simplest course would be to give new authority to the FCC rather than to a whole new agency, though the latter option also deserves consideration.

In this context, there should be a presumption against mandates and bans, and the most important regulatory tool might be a modest one: transparency. For example, regulators might be authorized to compel social media providers to provide periodic public reports, offering an account of exactly what they are doing to protect consumer privacy or to reduce threats to democratic processes.

Regulators should also be given the power to scrutinize existing efforts to make sure they are sufficient—and to require remedial steps if they are not.

These proposals are meant as an invitation to discussion, not as a blueprint. But it is increasingly clear that in view of their complex role in society and their massive power, social media platforms can jeopardize both democratic and economic goals. Now is the time to ask: What are we going to do about that?

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Climate crisis requires us to invest in future, not subsidize the past

By GINA COPLON-NEWFIELD

Tribune News Service

People across the United States, from Los Angeles to Des Moines to Orlando, deserve to drive affordable cars that don't harm the places they love and pollute the air we all breathe.

Yet America has and continues to subsidize the oil industry, which fuels traditional gasoline and diesel-powered cars.

Emissions from gas-powered cars contribute to ground ozone that worsens health conditions such as asthma. Additionally, transportation is the largest source of carbon emissions in the U.S., mostly due to the gasoline and diesel we guzzle in our cars and trucks.

Last October's U.N. climate report gave us a line in the sand—12 years—to take bold action to mitigate severe impacts from climate change, from increasing wildfires to stronger hurricanes.

Like others before it and others inevitably to come, that report is scary, but it solidifies the urgency of investing in solutions.

Electric Vehicles (EVs) are 30-80 percent lower—depending on region—in harmful emissions compared to conventional vehicles, even factoring in emissions from the electricity it takes to charge them. And that's today.

As our electric grid shifts to rely on more renewables, EVs become even cleaner over time. Every driver should have the opportunity to be a part of this shift, a shift that is complemented by affordable, accessible and clean public transit.

I've been an EV driver myself for years, and am one of the more than 1 million EV drivers in the U.S. who are loving how fast, quiet, technologically advanced and clean these cars are to drive. However, EVs only make up about 2 percent of new U.S. monthly light duty vehicle sales.

We have a long way to go. A big part of what is needed to accelerate the market are incentives to make EVs more affordable.

Cars like the Chevy Bolt and Nissan Leaf go for \$30,000 to \$38,000; a federal tax credit can shave thousands of dollars off and make a real difference for consumers.

Federal tax credits that reduce the upfront cost of an EV, coupled with state rebates and other local and state policies supportive of EVs, are essential catalysts that accelerate EV adoption by rewarding consumers for being the driver of a cleaner vehicle.

EVs are a crucial aspect to confronting the climate crisis, which is why now is the time to be increasing our investment in them, not scrapping it altogether.

Vehicle pollution is also a public health crisis

in our nation, disproportionately affecting communities of color and low-income communities in congested urban areas.

A recent report from the Union of Concerned Scientists confirms what many have known for decades: African-American, Latino, and Asian Californians are exposed to more particulate matter pollution (43, 39, and 21 percent, respectively) from cars, trucks, and buses than white Californians.

Policymakers have long subsidized oil and gas—\$14.7 billion on federal subsidies for fossil fuels annually—without questioning whether those investments should be phased out.

These are seen as the status quo of public policy, seldom framed as unfairly propping up the fossil fuel industry.

It's no secret that misconceptions around EVs are spread by these same interests threatened by the future of electric and unwilling to put the interest of the public and the planet before their polluting profits.

These interests lobby our elected officials to influence public policy that makes them richer, but it doesn't have to be this way.

Forward-thinking representatives in Congress recognize the urgency to act, which is why

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Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) speaks as Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), right, and other Congressional Democrats listen during a news conference in front of the U.S. Capitol on Thursday, Feb. 7, 2019, in Washington, DC. ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES/TNS

they've worked to invest in the future of EVs and infrastructure for them.

As the climate crisis clock ticks, it's past time for lawmakers to stop penalizing progress and put EVs in the fast lane for widespread, accessible adoption.

Gina Coplon-Newfield directs the Sierra Club's Clean Transportation for All Campaign, advocates for clean transportation solutions, including public transit, electric cars, zero emission buses, safe bike lanes and clean car standards for vehicle manufacturers. She earned a BA at Tufts University and a Masters in Public Administration at Harvard University. Readers may write to her at 50 F Street NW, 8th Floor, Washington, D.C.

'Green New Deal' would put us in the red

By DAVID DITCH

THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The Green New Deal has drawn a lot of criticism—and rightly so. Although this deal has nearly zero chance of passing Congress, the ideas it promotes would cause a great deal of costly damage if adopted.

Fully detailing the flaws in the GND, and its accompanying FAQ document, would easily fill a book, so let's focus on an aspect that concerns just about every American: transportation.

The GND calls for the expanded use of electric vehicles, as well as more public transportation and high-speed rail (though it's very short on the details of how this would be accomplished). None of those would be unusual proposals from big-government politicians.

However, the FAQ clarifies the scale of these statements: "build (electric vehicle) charging stations everywhere"; "build out high-speed rail at a scale where air travel stops becoming necessary"; "affordable public transit available to all"; "replace every combustion-engine vehicle."

CON

mental and fiscal costs. This has been demonstrated in eye-popping fashion by the California bullet train project, which fell prey to exactly the cost overruns and construction delays that plague nearly all government infrastructure projects.

If high-speed rail didn't make sense for a wealthy, high-population area such as coastal California, it makes even less sense for the nation's heartland. The expense it would take to build high-speed rail lines connecting every city in the country large enough to have an airport, followed by continual operation subsidies, would be stratospheric.

The only way to put a serious dent in the cross-country flights that burn the most jet fuel would be through exorbitant taxes or outright bans.

"Affordable public transit for all" similarly displays a decidedly urban-centric viewpoint. Bus and rail service in major metropolitan areas are prone to dysfunction, yet are at least within the realm of possibility.

Public transit for residents of every suburb, exurb and small town would be wildly expensive, inefficient and inconvenient. Do we imagine fleets of buses roaming the vast expanses of Wyoming, Kansas and the Dakotas in a vain search for passengers?

What about "charging stations everywhere"? Well, most mid-sized electric cars can only travel 90-125 miles on a charge, less than half the distance of a fully-fueled gas-powered car.

This would necessitate having exponentially more charging stations than the current number of gas stations to ensure comprehensive nationwide coverage. That would be a serious and costly undertaking, considering that there are roughly 120,000 gas stations in the country.

Individual charging stations for home use typically cost thousands of dollars apiece. Combine the cost of more robust stations designed for mass use with government proclivities for waste that yield million-dollar bus stops, and this idea becomes costly in a hurry.

And what about the goal to "replace every combustion-engine vehicle"? First, it should go without saying that if the federal government wants everyone to drive an electric vehicle, it wants nobody to drive a non-electric vehicle.

New, high-end electric vehicles hooked up to high-end charging stations can still need over half an hour for a less-than-complete charge. Low-end vehicles drawing from standard charging stations require hours to charge.

When one combines long charging times with the shorter range that electrics have compared to gas-powered automobiles, the inconvenience rural Americans would be burdened with is easy to see. In addition, crony capitalist electric vehicle subsidies would force Americans to pay for being inconvenienced.

Ultimately, the Green New Deal seeks to use the issue of the environment to impose a grand vision for a planned society—one with high taxes, less choice, and even more reliance on politicians in Washington, D.C.

America deserves a better, freer future than that.

David Ditch is a researcher in the Grover M. Hermann Center for the Federal Budget at The Heritage Foundation (heritage.org).

Although the proposals in the FAQ are radical, they're exactly what would be necessary to fulfill the stated purpose of the plan: to reduce carbon emissions to nearly zero and institute the kind of government controls championed by the purveyor of the first New Deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Yet each of these items is so wildly unrealistic that you have to wonder how familiar the authors are with life away from coastal urban centers.

Let's go back to the high-speed rail, which only members of the Acela Corridor, the train track from Boston to New York to Washington, would think plausible or desirable.

High-speed rail has significant environ-

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Forward-thinking representatives in Congress recognize the urgency to act, which is why

PRO



Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) speaks as Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), right, and other Congressional Democrats listen during a news conference in front of the U.S. Capitol on Thursday, Feb. 7, 2019, in Washington, DC. ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES/TNS

they've worked to invest in the future of EVs and infrastructure for them.

As the climate crisis clock ticks, it's past time for lawmakers to stop penalizing progress and put EVs in the fast lane for widespread, accessible adoption.

Gina Coplon-Newfield directs the Sierra Club's Clean Transportation for All Campaign, advocates for clean transportation solutions, including public transit, electric cars, zero emission buses, safe bike lanes and clean car standards for vehicle manufacturers. She earned a BA at Tufts University and a Masters in Public Administration at Harvard University. Readers may write to her at 50 F Street NW, 8th Floor, Washington, D.C.

'Green New Deal' would put us in the red

By DAVID DITCH

THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

The Green New Deal has drawn a lot of criticism—and rightly so. Although this deal has nearly zero chance of passing Congress, the ideas it promotes would cause a great deal of costly damage if adopted.

Fully detailing the flaws in the GND, and its accompanying FAQ document, would easily fill a book, so let's focus on an aspect that concerns just about every American: transportation.

The GND calls for the expanded use of electric vehicles, as well as more public transportation and high-speed rail (though it's very short on the details of how this would be accomplished). None of those would be unusual proposals from big-government politicians.

However, the FAQ clarifies the scale of these statements: "build (electric vehicle) charging stations everywhere"; "build out high-speed rail at a scale where air travel stops becoming necessary"; "affordable public transit available to all"; "replace every combustion-engine vehicle."

CON

mental and fiscal costs. This has been demonstrated in eye-popping fashion by the California bullet train project, which fell prey to exactly the cost overruns and construction delays that plague nearly all government infrastructure projects.

If high-speed rail didn't make sense for a wealthy, high-population area such as coastal California, it makes even less sense for the nation's heartland. The expense it would take to build high-speed rail lines connecting every city in the country large enough to have an airport, followed by continual operation subsidies, would be stratospheric.

The only way to put a serious dent in the cross-country flights that burn the most jet fuel would be through exorbitant taxes or outright bans.

"Affordable public transit for all" similarly displays a decidedly urban-centric viewpoint. Bus and rail service in major metropolitan areas are prone to dysfunction, yet are at least within the realm of possibility.

Public transit for residents of every suburb, exurb and small town would be wildly expensive, inefficient and inconvenient. Do we imagine fleets of buses roaming the vast expanses of Wyoming, Kansas and the Dakotas in a vain search for passengers?

What about "charging stations everywhere"? Well, most mid-sized electric cars can only travel 90-125 miles on a charge, less than half the distance of a fully-fueled gas-powered car.

This would necessitate having exponentially more charging stations than the current number of gas stations to ensure comprehensive nationwide coverage. That would be a serious and costly undertaking, considering that there are roughly 120,000 gas stations in the country.

Individual charging stations for home use typically cost thousands of dollars apiece. Combine the cost of more robust stations designed for mass use with government proclivities for waste that yield million-dollar bus stops, and this idea becomes costly in a hurry.

And what about the goal to "replace every combustion-engine vehicle"? First, it should go without saying that if the federal government wants everyone to drive an electric vehicle, it wants nobody to drive a non-electric vehicle.

New, high-end electric vehicles hooked up to high-end charging stations can still need over half an hour for a less-than-complete charge. Low-end vehicles drawing from standard charging stations require hours to charge.

When one combines long charging times with the shorter range that electrics have compared to gas-powered automobiles, the inconvenience rural Americans would be burdened with is easy to see. In addition, crony capitalist electric vehicle subsidies would force Americans to pay for being inconvenienced.

Ultimately, the Green New Deal seeks to use the issue of the environment to impose a grand vision for a planned society—one with high taxes, less choice, and even more reliance on politicians in Washington, D.C.

America deserves a better, freer future than that.

Although the proposals in the FAQ are radical, they're exactly what would be necessary to fulfill the stated purpose of the plan: to reduce carbon emissions to nearly zero and institute the kind of government controls championed by the purveyor of the first New Deal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Yet each of these items is so wildly unrealistic that you have to wonder how familiar the authors are with life away from coastal urban centers.

Let's go back to the high-speed rail, which only members of the Acela Corridor, the train track from Boston to New York to Washington, would think plausible or desirable.

High-speed rail has significant environ-

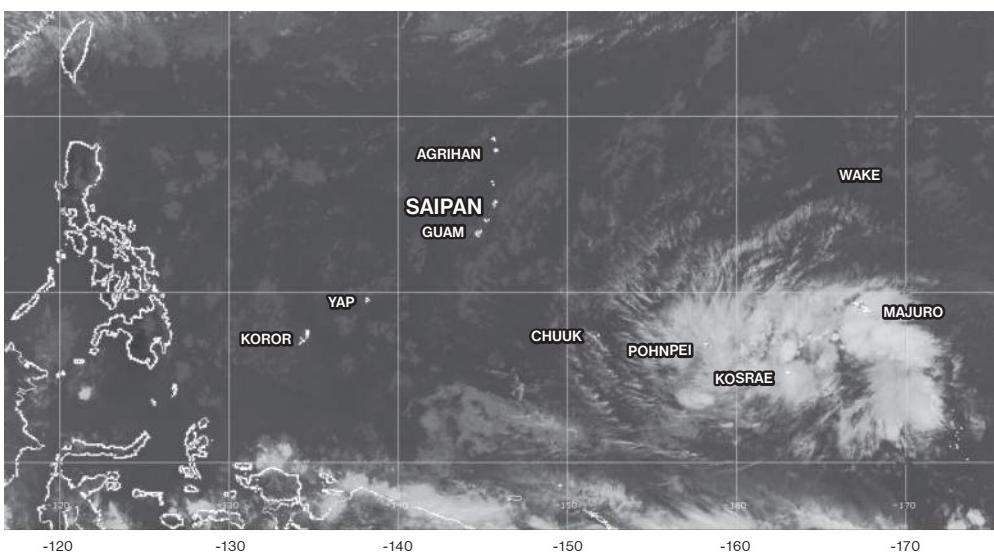
David Ditch is a researcher in the Grover M. Hermann Center for the Federal Budget at The Heritage Foundation (heritage.org).

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Breezy. Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Windy. Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.
87°	75°	86°	75°	87°
76°	86°	75°	86°	75°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:55 AM, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2019

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar imagery show only a few clouds and showers over the local area. Relatively dry weather will prevail through mid-week as model 700 mb relative humidity will be well below 50 percent until Thursday night. A circulation southeast of Kosrae this morning will move towards the Marianas. It is predicted to be near the local area by next weekend which will increase the chances for showers and thunderstorms. Little change in wind speeds as they will range between 15 to 25 mph all week. These winds are the result of an area of high pressure building to the north of the Marianas. The circulation mentioned above will also help to keep wind speeds elevated through part of the coming weekend.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲	▼	°F
Guam and Rota	Showers	85°	/	75°
Palau	Cloudy	85°	/	76°
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	85°	/	78°
Chuuk	Showers	85°	/	80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	84°	/	79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	84°	/	79°
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	85°	/	79°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲	▼	°F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	75°	/	70°
Beijing	Sunny	48°	/	21°
Hong Kong	Showers	78°	/	65°
Honolulu	Showers	78°	/	66°
London	Cloudy	55°	/	37°
Los Angeles	Sunny	61°	/	43°
Manila	Sunny	90°	/	72°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	73°	/	55°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	80°	/	74°
New York	Mostly Sunny	36°	/	25°
Osaka	Showers	55°	/	43°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	54°	/	36°
Busan	Sunny	54°	/	36°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	61°	/	41°
Salem	Rain	49°	/	45°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	52°	/	42°
Seoul	Sunny	45°	/	21°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	63°	/	45°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	44°	/	33°



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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 21, 2019

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:25pm	7:05pm	2, 4	UA104	4:50pm	5:31pm	2, 4
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:15am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:00am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:00am+1	1
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	0Z625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
				0Z625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3403	4:35am	8:25am	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily				
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:20pm	4:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (GHG)				HANGZHOU (GHG)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	11:00am	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	9:35pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:30am	7:55am	2, 6	3U8645	7:55pm	2:40am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:15am	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM	UA182/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	PR110/UA174	10:05pm	8:11am+1	Daily via GUM
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:30pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:40pm	2 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM				
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4	0Z722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
0Z626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	0Z722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
0Z626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
				U043	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
				UA117/159	9:15am	11:00pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM
				UA116/174	11:45pm	8:11am+1	2, 4 via GUM
				UA116/174	11:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
				1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN							

Business

IN BREXIT LIMBO

UK veers between high anxiety, grim humor

LONDON (AP)—It's said that history often repeats itself—the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. Many Britons feel they are living through both at the same time as their country navigates its way out of the European Union.

The British government awarded a contract to ship in emergency supplies to a company with no ships. It pledged to replace citizens' burgundy European passports with proudly British blue ones—and gave the contract to a Franco-Dutch company. It promised to forge trade deals with 73 countries by the end of March, but two years later has only a handful in place (including one with the Faroe Islands).

Pretty much everyone in the U.K. agrees that the Conservative government's handling

of Brexit has been disastrous. Unfortunately, that's about the only thing this divided nation can agree on.

With Britain due to leave the EU in six weeks and still no deal in sight on the terms of its departure, both supporters and opponents of Brexit are in a state of high anxiety.

Pro-EU "remainders" lament the looming end of Britons' right to live and work in 27 other European nations and fear the U.K. is about to crash out of the bloc without even a divorce to cushion the blow.

Brexiteers worry that their dream of leaving the EU will be dashed by bureaucratic shenanigans that will delay its departure or keep Britain bound to EU regulations forever.

"I still think they'll find a way to curtail it or extend it into



An anti-Brexit demonstrator wears a hat adorned with anti Brexit statements as she protests outside the Palace of Westminster in London, Thursday, Feb. 14, 2019. AP

infinity," said "leave" supporter Lucy Harris. "I have a horrible

feeling that they're going to dress it up and label it as something we want, but it isn't."

It has been more than two and a half years since Britons voted 52 percent to 48 percent to leave the EU. Then came many months of tense negotiations to settle on Brexit departure terms and the outline of future relations. At last, the EU and Prime Minister Theresa May's government struck a deal — then saw it resoundingly rejected last month by Britain's Parliament, which

like the rest of the country has split into pro-Brexit and pro-EU camps.

May is now seeking changes to the Brexit deal in hope of getting it through Parliament before March 29. EU leaders say they won't renegotiate, and accuse Britain of failing to offer a way out of the impasse.

May insists she won't ask the EU to delay Britain's departure, and has refused to rule out a cliff-edge no-deal Brexit.

Meanwhile, Brexit has clogged the gears of Britain's

economic and political life. The economy has stalled, growing by only 0.2 percent in the fourth quarter as business investment registered a fourth straight quarterly decline.

Big political decisions have been postponed, as May's minority Conservative government struggles to get bills through a squabbling and divided Parliament. Major legislation needed to prepare for Brexit has yet to be approved.

Britain still does not have a deal on future trade with the EU, and it's unclear what tariffs or other barriers British firms that do business with Europe will face after March 29.

That has left businesses and citizens in an agonizing limbo.

Rod McKenzie, director of policy at the Road Haulage Association, a truckers' lobby group, feels "pure anger" at a government he says has failed to plan, leaving haulers uncertain whether they will be able to travel to EU countries after March 29.

Merkel defends Iran deal, multilateralism but Pence resists

MUNICH (AP)—German Chancellor Angela Merkel drew lengthy applause Saturday for her spirited defense of a multilateral approach to global affairs and support for Europe's decision to stand by a nuclear deal with Iran.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence was not among the impressed, however, and he doubled down on American criticism of Europe.

Merkel's comments at the

Munich Security Conference, an annual gathering of world leaders and top global defense and foreign policy officials, followed days of acrimony between the U.S. and Europe over Iran.

Merkel told the group—which included the largest U.S. delegation ever with dozens of members of Congress, Ivanka Trump, Pence and others—that she shared American concerns about many Iranian efforts to increase its power in the region.

But while she said the split with the U.S. over Iran's nuclear agreement "depresses me very much," she defended it as an important channel to Tehran, stressing the need for international diplomacy.

"I see the ballistic missile

program, I see Iran in Yemen and above all I see Iran in Syria," she said. "The only question that stands between us on this issue is, do we help our common cause, our common aim of containing the damaging or difficult development of Iran, by withdrawing from the one remaining agreement? Or do we help it more by keeping the small anchor we have in order maybe to exert pressure in other areas?"

Germany, Britain, France, China, Russia and the European Union have been trying to keep the 2015 deal with Iran alive since President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of it last year.

The deal offers Iran sanctions relief for limiting its nuclear program. The International Atomic Energy Agency has said that, so far, Tehran is sticking to the agreement.

But the U.S. argues that the deal just puts off when Iran might be able to build a nuclear bomb. Speaking after Merkel, Pence pushed for Europeans to end their involvement in the nuclear deal, calling Iran "the leading state sponsor of terrorism in the world."

"The time has come for our European partners to stop undermining U.S. sanctions against this murderous revolutionary regime," Pence said. "The time has come for our European partners to stand with us and with the Iranian people, our allies and friends in the region. The time has come for our European partners to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal."

Merkel's speech was warmly received, while Pence's was met with polite applause.

"This was a big and say-it-as-it-is Merkel speech," Daniela Schwarzer, the director of the German Council on Foreign Relations think tank, wrote on Twitter. "Minutes of applause and standing ovations for a powerful commitment to picking up the pieces of a shattered (world) order and working on a European and (international) order that creates win-win situations."

Former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, who was in office when the Iran nuclear deal was negotiated, went out of his way to thank Merkel and defended the Iran deal as a "significant agreement."

Employee prefers data to dealing with public

Q: Let me just say that I hate working with the public. When I took my current job, my manager said I would be doing data entry and filing. Since then, however, I have been assigned to work the front desk several times a week. I love entering data and don't mind filing, but I despise dealing with the rude, pushy people who come into this office.

I must be a pretty good actress, because my manager always says that I'm great with customers. I've never told him that they drive me absolutely crazy. To get away from all this interaction, I'm thinking about taking a course in medical coding or billing. Does that sound like a good plan?

A: Like many people, you selected a position that matched your personality, only to see it morph into something entirely different. While some folks might actually prefer difficult customers to a steady diet of data, the change has obviously made this job a bad fit for you.

You are certainly to be commended for making an effort to treat visitors well despite your strong negative feelings. That's not an easy act to pull off. But even if no one ever notices the pent-up anger behind your surface cordiality, maintaining that charade has got to be exhausting.

The stress of feeling one way and acting another is not sustainable for long, so you're wise to start looking for a less

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of Secrets to Winning at Office Politics. Send in questions and get free coaching tips at <http://www.yourofficecoach.com>, or follow her on Twitter @officecoach.



interactive job. But before shelling out cash for a training course, take the time to explore a variety of options. In the rush to escape a bad work situation, people often make impulsive decisions which they later come to regret.

Q: "Jeff" and "Amy" both work for me. Recently, I made the mistake of telling Jeff that I was unhappy with Amy's performance. He repeated my comments, and now Amy is justifiably angry. How can I recover from this screw-up?

A: First, kudos to you for recognizing that managers should never discuss one employee with another. But if you also failed to tell Amy about these issues directly, then you owe her both an apology and some feedback.

For example: "Amy, I want to apologize for discussing my concerns about your work with Jeff instead of talking to you. That was inexcusable, and it won't happen again. However, we do need to figure out why your project is behind schedule."

Your lapse in judgment, while unfortunate, does not

exempt Amy from a necessary discussion about her performance issues.

■ ■ ■

Dear Readers: With very mixed feelings, I need to let you know that this will be the last Your Office Coach column. For 13 years, I have thoroughly enjoyed learning about your workplace challenges and offering possible solutions. Your stories about horrid bosses, aggravating coworkers, frustrating job searches and other career dilemmas have helped countless others who are dealing with similar problems.

Unfortunately, both work and personal demands have made it increasingly difficult to find sufficient time for writing. My views on many career topics can still be found on my website at www.yourofficecoach.com. Questions can also be submitted there, and I will try to personally answer as many as possible. I do hope you have enjoyed reading this column as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

— Marie McIntyre

Nation

Aurora shooter's permit was revoked but gun wasn't seized

AURORA, Ill. (AP)—An initial background check failed to detect a felony conviction that should have barred the man who killed five co-workers and wounded six other people at a suburban Chicago manufacturing plant from buying the gun.

Months later, a second background check of Gary Martin found his 1995 aggravated assault conviction in Mississippi involving the stabbing of an ex-girlfriend. But it prompted only a letter stating his gun permit had been revoked and ordering him to turn over his firearm to police—raising questions about the state's enforcement to ensure those who lose their permits also turn over their weapons.

A vigil for the victims, including a university student on his first day as an intern and a longtime plant manager, was held Sunday outside the Henry Pratt Co. in Aurora, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) west of Chicago. More than 1,500 people braved snow and freezing drizzle to attend.

Martin, 45, was killed in a shootout with officers Friday, ending his deadly rampage at the plant. His state gun license permit was revoked in 2014, Aurora Police Chief Kristen Ziman said.

But he never gave up the .40-caliber Smith & Wesson handgun he used in the attack. Investigators are still trying to determine what exactly law enforcement agencies did after that letter was sent,



AP

A woman places flowers at a makeshift memorial Sunday, Feb. 17, 2019, in Aurora, Ill., near Henry Pratt Co. manufacturing company where several were killed on Friday.

Ziman said.

Illinois lawmakers who support more gun control measures said Martin was able to keep the gun because of a flaw in the 1968 law that requires residents to get a Firearm Owner's Identification card, or FOID card, to purchase firearms or ammunition. They must pass a background check, but the

law does not mandate that police ensure weapons have been removed if a red flag is raised later.

Legislation was introduced in 2016 to require police go to the homes of gun owners who have their FOID cards revoked and search for the weapons, but it failed over concerns it would overtax police departments, said Democratic Rep.

Kathleen Willis.

She wants to see a similar measure introduced again.

"Let's use some common sense. If you have someone with a felony, obviously they are not the best law-abiding citizens who are going to fol-

low through when they get the letter and go, 'oh yeah, here's my gun, no problem,'" Willis said. "We have to have oversight. That's the biggest flaw in the whole system. We're asking people who already have done something wrong,

White House indicates Trump to veto disapproval of emergency

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)—President Donald Trump is prepared to issue the first veto of his term if Congress votes to disapprove his declaration of a national emergency along the U.S.-Mexico border, a top White House adviser said on Sunday.

White House senior adviser Stephen Miller told "Fox News Sunday" that "the president is going to protect his national emergency declaration." Asked if that meant Trump was ready to veto a resolution of disapproval, Miller added, "He's going to protect his national emergency declaration, guaranteed."

The West Wing is digging in for fights on multiple fronts as the president's effort to go around Congress to fund his long-promised border wall faces bipartisan criticism and multiple legal challenges. After lawmakers in both parties blocked his requests for billions of dollars to fulfill his

signature campaign pledge, Trump's declared national emergency Friday shifts billions of federal dollars earmarked for military construction to the border.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra told ABC's "This Week" that his state would sue "imminently" to block the order, after the American Civil Liberties Union and the nonprofit watchdog group Public Citizen announced Friday they were taking legal action.

Democrats are planning to introduce a resolution disapproving of the declaration once Congress returns to session and it is likely to pass both chambers. Several Republican senators are already indicating they would vote against Trump—though there do not yet appear to be enough votes to override a veto by the president.

The White House's Miller insisted that Congress granted

the president wide berth under the National Emergencies Act to take action. But Trump's declaration goes beyond previous emergencies in shifting money after Congress blocked his funding request for the wall, which will likely factor in legal challenges.

Trump aides acknowledge that Trump cannot meet his pledge to build the wall by the time voters decide whether to grant him another term next year, but insist his base will remain by his side as long as he is not perceived to have given up the fight on the barrier.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., told CBS's "Face the Nation" that he believes Congress needs to act to "defend" its powers of the purse.

"I do think that we should not set the terrible precedent of letting a president declare a national emergency simply as a way of getting around the congressional appropriations process," he said.

ACROSS THE NATION

Work-release inmates help rescue Florida baby locked in SUV

NEW PORT RICHEY, Fla. (AP)—Some work-release inmates made a Valentine's Day rescue when a Florida couple accidentally locked their baby inside their SUV. Pasco County Sheriff's Office spokesman Kevin Doll told WFLA-TV the parents could not afford a locksmith, and the father intended to break a window. That's when a crew of trustees working nearby in their black-and-white striped uniforms offered to help. They helped pry open the front door just enough for one inmate to use a coat hanger to push a button that unlocked the SUV. The baby's mother, Shadow Lantry, told WPEC-TV the infant was "just sitting there happy" throughout Thursday's ordeal. Sheriff Chris Nocco told WZVN-TV the trustees "want to do the right thing in life."

Officials: Centralia sinkhole unrelated to underground fire

CENTRALIA, Pa. (AP)—State environmental authorities say a 100-foot (30-meter) sinkhole found in a central Pennsylvania town almost completely emptied by a decades-long underground fire is unrelated to the blaze. The (Bloomsburg) Press Enterprise reports that a Department of Environmental Protection crew started work Friday to fill the sinkhole near Route 61 in Centralia. Work is expected to continue this week.

The Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation says it's due to mine subsidence on a different underground coal seam, and mine maps indicate such things occurred before the fire. A \$42 million federal relocation program moved more than 1,000 people out of Centralia by the late 1980s because of the fire that's burned underground since 1962. Only a few people who sued for the right to remain still live there.

Dog reunited with owner after 8 month, 175-mile journey

SOUTH PARIS, Maine (AP)—A dog that went missing in Massachusetts months ago has been reunited with its family after being found in Maine, 175 miles (282 kilometers) away. The Bangor Daily News reports 5-year-old king shepherd Kaiser made his way from Ashby, Massachusetts, to South Paris, Maine, over a span of eight months. The pooch jumped a wall at the home of a woman who was caring for him before going missing. Kaiser's owner, Tom Wollcott, and his children were reunited with the dog Sunday morning. Wollcott conducted an exhaustive search, including using a drone to try to find Kaiser. A Bethel, Maine, woman had been feeding Kaiser and called animal control, which took the dog to a no-kill shelter in South Paris. The shelter says in a Facebook post that Wollcott was then able to identify Kaiser.

to do something right."

Last year, Illinois joined other states like California in passing a law that allows family members to petition to have a gun removed from a home and a person's permit revoked if they believe they might use it to harm themselves or others.

Lawmakers are also working to add teeth to restrictions on the transfers of gun ownership from a person whose permit has been revoked, Willis said. The change follows a 2018 shooting at a Tennessee Waffle House involving a man who had to give his guns to his father after his Illinois FOID card was revoked, but his father later gave them back to him.

Legislators want people who obtain such weapons to sign an affidavit vowing to not return the weapons to the original owner.

Martin was no stranger to police in Aurora, where he had been arrested six times over the years for what Ziman described as "traffic and domestic battery-related issues" and for violating an order of protection.

Asia

FOR NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Abe mum on reports he nominated Trump

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his chief spokesman declined Monday to say if Abe had nominated President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, though they praised Trump for dealings with North Korea.

Questioned in parliament about reports he had done so, Abe said: "In light of the Nobel Committee's policy of not disclosing recommenders and nominees for 50 years, I decline to comment."

Neither the prime minister nor his spokesman denied Trump's comment to reporters Friday that Abe had nominated him. Trump said Abe had sent him a "beautiful copy" of a letter sent to the Nobel committee.

Trump's claim could not be

immediately verified.

Abe praised Trump on Monday in a lower house budget committee meeting.

"President Trump has been decisively responding toward resolving North Korea's nuclear and missile problems, and last year he held historic U.S.-North Korea summit talks," he said.

Abe added that Trump had also passed on to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un Japan's own concerns about abductions of Japanese citizens by Pyongyang, saying "he and the entire White House also actively cooperated in resolving the issue."

"I highly praise President Trump's leadership," Abe said.

The government's top spokesman, Yoshihide Suga, echoed Abe in telling reporters that Japan highly valued

Trump's efforts on North Korea's nuclear disarmament, but also refused other comment.

The Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun reported on Sunday, citing unnamed government sources, that Abe nominated Trump's at the president's request.

The deadline each year for nominations is midnight, Jan. 31. According to the website of the Nobel committee, there are 304 candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize for 2019. It said 219 are individuals and 85 are organizations.

The U.S. is Japan's ally and anchor for national defense and Abe has assiduously cultivated cordial ties with Trump.

He was the first foreign leader to meet with Trump after he won the 2016 presidential election.

China's leaders want more babies, but local officials resist

BEIJING (AP)—Facing a future demographic crisis and aging society, China's leaders are desperately seeking to persuade couples to have more children.

But bureaucrats don't seem to have gotten the message, fining a couple in a recent widely publicized case for having a third child against the strict letter of the law.

The move has sparked public outrage as people vent their anger at population control officials who are hungry for revenue and have long persecuted couples for violating the now-scraped "one-child policy."

"The country is doing all it can to encourage childbirth but the local governments need money, so we end with this sort of madness," a columnist and political commentator who writes under the name Li-anpeng said on China's Weibo microblogging service.

"The low birthrate has everyone on edge, yet the local governments care only about collecting fees," journalist Jin Wei wrote on her verified Weibo account. "I don't know of any other nation that pulls its people in different directions like this."

The Wangs, the couple at the heart of the recent controversy, were ordered by local authorities in Shandong province to pay a fine known as a "social maintenance fee" of 64,626 yuan (\$9,500) immediately after the birth of their third child in January 2017. After various deadlines came and went, the family's entire bank savings of 22,957 yuan (\$3,400) were frozen last month, with the balance still due.

"I just don't know what I'm going to do," the hus-

band, Wang Baohua, was quoted as saying by local media last week.

The situation the couple faces has its roots in decades-old fears that China's population would outstrip its resources, along with the ruling Communist Party's all-consuming fervor to control people's most personal decisions.

Family planning regulations emerged in the 1970s, and in 1980 the notorious "one-child policy" came into effect, mandating often brutal punishments for violators ranging from forced abortions and sterilizations to fines and workplace demotions.

Fast-forward 35 years, and a radical change of course was ordered after leaders realized an aging population and declining workforce threatened to hamstring the country's future development. In 2016, the one-child policy was officially replaced with a two-child policy and Chinese couples were urged to go forth and multiply—within limits.

But the bump in the birthrate was fleeting. Last month, the National Bureau of Statistics said the number of new births in 2018 fell to 15.23 million in a total population of 1.395 billion—a growth rate of .381 percent and the lowest increase since 1961, resulting in fully 2 million fewer births than in 2017.

China's population is estimated to peak at 1.442 billion in 2029 and then gradually decline, potentially fulfilling the conventional wisdom that China will grow old before it grows rich.

Cases such as the Wangs' remain common, despite a growing recognition of the

seriousness of the population crisis, said Yi Fuxian, a professor at the University of Wisconsin Madison and a leading critic of Chinese population policies.

Bureaucratic inertia and the desire of local officials to chase revenue contribute to the problem, Yi said.

China, with an estimated fertility rate of 1.02 in 2018, now finds itself in the same category as other predominantly Chinese societies in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and Singapore, Yi said. Average fertility rates in those regions and countries from 2005 to 2017 were 1.10, 1.12, 1.08 and 1.23 respectively.

Yet the one-child policy has weighed down China with the additional burden of distorted attitudes toward the family, society and childbearing, where one or no children have become the norm, Yi said.

With economic growth the primary guarantor of continued Communist Party rule, the leadership is concerned. The sputtering economy grew at 6.6 percent last year, its slowest pace in three decades, fueling fears over the long-term trend of a shrinking pool of workers paying the pensions and health care costs for a ballooning population of retirees.

Despite that, there remains considerable resistance to lifting controls entirely, something that might give people greater autonomy.

Local bureaucrats in the Wang case said they were just following the law, citing the exact articles and passages. They also have a strong stake in maintaining the rules that justify their jobs and authority.

World

TAKING THEIR LAST BREATH

IS hides among Syrian civilians

BAGHOUZ, Syria (AP)—

From a self-proclaimed caliphate that once spread across much of Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State group has been knocked back to a speck of land on the countries' shared border. In that tiny patch on the banks of the Euphrates River, hundreds of militants are hiding among civilians under the shadow of a small hill — encircled by forces waiting to declare the territorial defeat of the extremist group.

A spokesman for the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces fighting the militants said Sunday that the group is preventing civilians from leaving the area, closing a corridor from which nearly 40,000 residents have managed to escape since December.

"They are taking their last breath," said Dino, an SDF fighter deployed at a base near the front line in the village of Baghouz, about 2 kilometers (1½ miles) from the militants' last spot.

An Associated Press team visited the base Sunday, escorted by the SDF, driving past mostly one-story rural houses that were destroyed, a reminder of the cost of the battle. Occasional airstrikes and artillery rounds by the U.S.-led coalition supporting the SDF, meant to clear land mines for the advance, could be seen in the distance.

The road to the base passes through a number of villages and towns from which IS were uprooted in recent weeks.

In Hajin, a major center for the militants that fell to the SDF in December, some residents have begun to return but the town remains battered by the fighting and



U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fighters sit outside a building as fight against Islamic State militants continue in the village of Baghouz, Syria, Saturday, Feb. 16, 2019.

airstrikes. Small shops selling tools and construction material have sprung up.

For weeks, the militants fought desperately for their shrinking territory. Once in control of about a third of Syria and Iraq, they now are down to what SDF officials describe as a small tented village atop a network of tunnels and caves. But they are holding on to hundreds

of civilians — some of them possibly hostages — taking cover among them at the edge of Baghouz, the village in eastern Deir el-Zour province.

"Regrettably, Daesh have closed all the roads," preventing civilians from leaving, said Mustafa Bali, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led SDF, referring to IS by its Arabic acronym. "We want to take revenge. We will not let the blood of our martyrs go to waste," Othman said. "We are waiting for the civilians to go out, and we will go in and attack. It is a matter of days. They are under siege, no food and no water. They are encircled from four sides. They have to give up."

He added that the militants are running out of ammunition.

WORLD BRIEFS

Family: UK teen who joined Islamic State has baby in Syria

LONDON (AP)—The family of a British teenager who ran away to join the Islamic State group and now wants to return to the U.K. said Sunday she has given birth to a baby boy. The family's lawyer said 19-year-old Shamima Begum and the baby are in good health. In a recent interview with The Times newspaper, Begum said she had previously lost two babies to illness and malnutrition. News about Begum and her desire to go back to Britain have ignited a debate in the U.K. about how to deal with citizens who joined IS and want to leave Syria now that the extremist group is on the verge of collapse. Begum was one of a group of schoolgirls from London's Bethnal Green neighborhood who went to Syria to marry IS fighters in 2015 at a time

when the group's online recruitment program lured many impressionable young people to its self-proclaimed caliphate.

Iran unveils first semi-heavy missile-equipped submarine

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran's state TV is reporting that the country's President Hassan Rouhani has unveiled the first Iranian made semi-heavy submarine. The Sunday report said the Fateh, "Conqueror" in Persian, is capable of being fitted with cruise missiles. Since 1992, Iran has developed a homegrown defense industry that produces light and heavy weapons ranging from mortars and torpedoes to tanks and submarines. The Fateh has subsurface-to-surface missiles with a range of about 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles), capable of reaching Israel and U.S. military bases in the region.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW

The Nissan Armada full-size sport utility, now in its second generation, returns for 2019 with a few updates, including new standard safety technology.

Now included on all trim levels are Rear Door Alert, Intelligent Cruise Control, Automatic Emergency Braking and Intelligent Forward Collision Warning.

There are four trim levels for 2019: SV (base price \$46,790 plus \$1,395 freight), SL (\$51,590), Platinum (\$59,690) and Platinum Reserve (\$62,690), a new top-of-the-line model added last year. All of these come with rear-wheel drive, but four-wheel drive can be added to any trim level for an additional \$3,000.

Also for 2019, the Armada comes with NissanConnect Services powered by SiriusXM, including an eight-inch multi-touch display, HD Radio, SiriusXM Travel Link with three years of service (SiriusXM subscription sold separately), Enhanced Voice Recognition, Hands-Free Text Messaging Assistant, and additional USB ports for all models.

Extras on the Platinum Reserve include Dark Chrome on the grille, door handles and outside mirrors; special 20-inch Dark Chrome wheels; two-tone leather seats with unique stitching; Black Quartz and premium wood-tone interior trim; and an embossed "Platinum Reserve" emblem on the lid of the center console.

The Platinum and Platinum Reserve models come with the Intelligent Rear-View Mirror, which uses a high-resolution camera at the rear exterior to transmit a rear-facing image onto a monitor built into the center rearview mirror. But there is a switch at the bottom of the mirror that lets the driver change between camera and standard mirror views.

This camera system eliminates blind spots in the rearview mirror image caused by such interior elements as headrests, body panels and large cargo items.

Armada's second generation is based on the architecture of the similar Infiniti QX80 luxury SUV.

The original Armada was introduced in 2004 as the Pathfinder Armada, and was built on the same chassis as the Nissan Titan pickup. It was assembled at the Nissan plant in Canton, Miss. Now, the Armada comes from the same plant in Kyushu, Japan, that has been assembling the QX80 since it moved into its second generation for 2011.

Ever since the midsize, seven-passenger Nissan Pathfind-



Nissan's Armada big sport utility has room for up to eight, starts at \$46,790

By G. CHAMBERS WILLIAMS III
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

er was shifted to a car-based crossover format five years ago, the Armada is the only three-row, truck-based SUV left in the Nissan lineup.

Inside, there is seating for up to eight people, and it still has a conventional body-on-frame design rather than the unibody construction of a crossover. It's 1.2 inches longer overall than the first-generation Armada, but has a 2.1-inch shorter wheelbase. It's 0.6 inches wider and 2.2 inches lower.

The Armada can be configured for seven passengers by replacing the standard three-person second-row bench seat with two captain's chairs (\$450 extra). That lowers the capacity to two in front, two in the middle and three in the rear.

We tested the 2019 Armada SV with all-wheel drive and the standard eight-passenger arrangement (base price \$49,790). We didn't need the third row during our week with the Armada, but it can easily accommodate big kids or average-size adults.

For some trips, we did have two adult passengers in the middle row, and they found their seats to be quite roomy and comfortable.

The Armada is high enough off the ground (9.1-inch ground clearance for the SV, 9.2-inch for the other trims) that it can be a bit difficult to get into from outside, especially for short people. To help, there are steel side step rails with rubber pads on each side.

Armada competes in the full-size SUV class along with the Chevrolet Tahoe/Suburban and its siblings, the GMC Yukon/Yukon XL, as well as the Ford Expedition and Toyota Sequoia. Also in the mix is the Lincoln Navigator, which also is a direct competitor to the QX80.

EPA ratings are 14 city/19 highway/16 combined for rear-drive models, and 13/18/15 for four-wheel-drives. During our

NUTS & BOLTS

2019 Nissan Armada

- **The package:** Full-size, seven- or eight-passenger, five-door, rear- or four-wheel-drive, V-8 powered, body-on-frame sport utility vehicle.
- **Highlights:** The Armada was redesigned for 2017 to mirror the premium Infiniti QX80 model on which it is based. A Platinum Reserve model was new for 2018, and more high-tech safety features were added for 2019. This is a big, premium family hauler with lots of power, a smooth ride, and a long list of available comfort, convenience and safety features.
- **Negatives:** Can get pricey with all the extras.
- **Engine:** 5.6-liter V-8.
- **Transmission:** Seven-speed automatic.
- **Power/torque:** 390 HP/394 foot-pounds.
- **Brakes, front/rear:** Disc/disc, antilock.
- **Length:** 208.9 inches.
- **Curb weight range:** 5,576-5,963.
- **Cargo capacity:** 16.5 cubic feet (behind third row); 49.9 (third row folded).
- **Electronic stability control:** Standard.
- **Side air bags:** Front seat-mounted, three-row side curtain.
- **Towing capacity:** 8,500 pounds.
- **EPA fuel economy:** 14 mpg city/19 highway/16 combined (2WD); 13/18/15 (4WD).
- **Fuel capacity/type:** 26 gallons/premium recommended, but not required.
- **Base price range (2019):** \$46,790-\$65,690, plus \$1,395 freight.
- **Price as tested:** \$52,100, including freight and options (2019 SV 4WD).
- **Major competitors:** Chevrolet Tahoe/Suburban/GMC Yukon/Yukon XL, Cadillac Escalade, Lincoln Navigator, Ford Expedition, Audi Q7, Toyota Sequoia, Infiniti QX80.
- **On the Road rating:** 9.3 (of a possible 10).

Prices shown are manufacturer's suggested retail; actual selling price may vary.

All trim levels of the Armada come with a 5.6-liter Endurance V-8 engine, rated at 390 horsepower and 394 foot-pounds of torque. It's connected to a seven-speed automatic transmission. This

test week, with about 70 percent interstate highway driving, we averaged 16.7 mpg.

The now standard Intelligent Cruise Control on our Armada was very precise, holding the vehicle to the preset

mirrors with turn signals.

Other exterior elements include a black V-motion grille and standard LED low-beam headlights with halogen high beams and LED Daytime Running Lights. Headlights are automatic on/off, and there are fog lights on the SL, Platinum and Platinum Reserve models (optional on SV).

At the rear, there are LED taillights. There are functional air intake vents on the front fenders. Chrome-plated electro-chromatic mirrors with memory, heat and puddle lamps are standard on SL and Platinum models.

The Armada has 16.5 cubic feet of cargo space behind the third-row seat, or 49.9 cubic feet with the third-row seatbacks folded down. We hauled some Home Depot purchases in the rear with the third row folded, and had lots of room for everything we bought. A power tailgate with an auto-closing feature is standard on SL and Platinum/Platinum Reserve models, but optional on the SV in the Driver Package (\$600), included on our tester. It also brought front fog lights, auto-dimming rearview mirror, power-folding third-row seat, power tailgate, and trailer wiring harness.

There are also body-color front and rear bumpers; chrome trim on the grille, side-window moldings and door handles; privacy glass; dark-painted over-fenders; dark-painted roof rails; and front and rear parking sensors.

SV models have premium cloth seats, while leather is standard on SL and Platinum/Platinum Reserve. Three interior colors are offered – Charcoal and Almond (cloth and leather) and Tan (leather only).

Because this is a truly off-road-capable SUV, the all-mode four-wheel drive features low-range gearing with a two-speed transfer case for extreme trail driving. We didn't take our Armada on any serious off-road trails, but did explore some unpaved park roads, though.

Also standard are four-wheel antilock disc brakes with Electronic Brake-force Distribution and Brake Assist.

Three wheel and tire combinations are offered, depending on model, either 18 or 20 inches. Our SV model came with 18-inch alloy wheels.

Besides the Driver Package, the only other extra on our SV four-wheel-drive Armada was the carpeted floor mat/cargo mat package (\$315).

The exterior of our tester was a very nice Gun Metallic color (dark gray).

Total sticker price was \$52,100, including freight and options.

Life & Style

Chicago police seek follow-up interview with Jussie Smollett

By SARA BURNETT and GREG MCCUNE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO (AP)—Chicago police said Sunday they're still seeking a follow-up interview with Jussie Smollett after receiving new information that "shifted" their investigation of a reported attack on the "Empire" actor.

The trajectory of the investigation "shifted" after detectives questioned two brothers about the attack and released them late Friday without charges, police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said Saturday. He said police also reached out to Smollett's attorney to request another interview with him.

Guglielmi said Sunday the interview had not yet been conducted. He declined to comment on published reports that police believe Smollett staged the assault or that a grand jury may hear evidence in the case. The reports cited unnamed police sources.

"We're not confirming, de-

nying or commenting on anything until we can talk to him and we can corroborate some information that we've gotten," he said.

Smollett, who is black and gay, has said he was physically attacked last month by two masked men shouting racial and anti-gay slurs and "This is MAGA country!" He said they looped a rope around his neck before running away as he was returning home from an early morning stop at a Subway restaurant in downtown Chicago. He said they also poured some kind of chemical on him.

Pamela Sharp, a spokeswoman for Smollett, said Sunday that there were no updates "as of now." Another spokeswoman, Anne Kavanagh, later said she couldn't comment on whether Smollett had agreed to another interview.

Smollett's lawyers said late Saturday that the actor felt "victimized" by reports that he played a role in the assault, adding that, "Nothing is further from the truth and anyone

claiming otherwise is lying." The statement from attorneys Todd Pugh and Victor P. Henderson also said Smollett would continue cooperating with police.

Police said they combed surveillance

video in the heavily monitored area where Smollett said the attack occurred but were unable to find any footage of the incident. They did obtain images of two people they said they would like to question.

On Wednesday, Chicago



Smollett

police picked up the brothers at O'Hare International Airport as they returned from Nigeria. They described them as "suspects" in the assault, questioned them and searched their apartment.

Then, late Friday evening they released the two men without charges and said they were no longer suspects. They said they had gleaned new information from their interrogation of them.

One of the men is Smollett's personal trainer, whom the ac-

tor hired to help get him physically ready for a music video, Smollett's attorneys said in their statement.

"It is impossible to believe that this person could have played a role in the crime against Jussie or would falsely claim Jussie's complicity," the attorneys said.

Police have said they were investigating the attack as a possible hate crime and considered Smollett a victim. Reports of the assault drew outrage and support for him on social media from some politicians and celebrities.

Smollett's account of what happened also has been met with skepticism, particularly in the wake of the latest developments.

Smollett, who is also a musician, gave an emotional speech during a Feb. 2 concert in West Hollywood, California, saying he went ahead with the show because he couldn't let his attackers win.

He also gave an interview to Robin Roberts of ABC News that aired Thursday in which he said he was "pissed" at people who did not believe he was attacked.

Smollett developments leave some baffled, others outraged

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The national outrage that simmered after actor Jussie Smollett said he was attacked by people shouting racial and anti-gay slurs was fueled in part by celebrities who spoke out loud and strong on social media.

But the outrage has now been replaced by surprise, doubt and bafflement as the singers, actors and politicians who came out in support of the "Empire" star struggle to digest the strange twists the case has taken. Some conservative pundits, meanwhile, have gleefully seized on the moment.

The narrative that just a week ago seemed cut-and-dry has become messy and divisive—and it's all playing out again on social media.

Smollett, who is black and gay, said he was physically attacked last month by two masked men shouting racial and anti-gay slurs and "This is MAGA country!"—a reference to the Make America Great Again slogan used in

President Donald Trump's election campaign. Smollett said the attackers looped a rope around his neck before running away as he was out getting food at a Subway restaurant.

Celebrities including Ariana Grande, Zendaya, Kerry Washington, Shonda Rhimes and Andy Cohen rallied behind Smollett immediately. They focused on the alleged hate crime as a microcosm for the ills of America in 2019 and how intolerance can lead to violent acts. Smollett's own celebrity and activism for the rights of the LGBTQ community helped raise the profile of the case even more.

But then published reports emerged that police believe Smollett may have staged the attack—something the actor has vehemently denied through his lawyers—or that a grand jury may hear evidence in the case. The reports cited unidentified police sources.

On Saturday, police

spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said the trajectory of the case had "shifted"—that two brothers who had been questioned had been released without charges and investigators wanted to speak to Smollett again. Guglielmi did not elaborate. On Sunday, he issued a statement saying that police "are not in a position to confirm, deny or comment on the validity of what's been unofficially released."

Smollett's attorneys said Saturday that he would continue to cooperate with police but that he felt victimized by the suggestion he played a role in his attack.

Skeptics, including conservative pundits Dinesh D'Souza and Tomi Lahren, seized on the doubts that have arisen.

"And Libs wonder why we don't believe their BS stories," Lahren tweeted Saturday. On Sunday, she criticized those who used social media after the attack to push

"the narrative (that) Trump supporters are racist homophobes."

The response from Smollett's celebrity supporters has ranged from silence to confusion and disbelief.

Author Roxane Gay tweeted Saturday that she doesn't know what to say, but that the situation is a "mess" and a "travesty."

"I genuinely thought no one, and especially no one that famous, could make something like that up," Gay wrote.

"The lie is so damaging. The time the CPD has spent/wasted on this. The people who supported him."

GLAAD, a nongovernmental media-monitoring organization founded by LGBT members of the media, on Thursday reiterated its support for Smollett. The group said in a statement that the actor had been doubly victimized: first by the attack and then by the doubts cast around it.

Julia Roberts to receive George Eastman Award for movie work

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP)—Actress Julia Roberts will be this year's recipient of the George Eastman Award, given to honor contributions to the art of cinema.

The George Eastman Museum in Rochester says it will honor the "Pretty Woman" and "Steel Magnolias" actress on May 2.

Past recipients include Lauren Bacall, Charlie Chaplin, Gary Cooper and Meryl Streep.

Museum director Bruce

Barnes cites the breadth of Roberts' career and roles over the past 30 years. She has earned a best actress Academy Award and three Golden Globes, along with more than a dozen other nominations.

The museum says it established the George Eastman Award in 1955 as the first retrospective award to honor film work of enduring artistic value.

Tickets for the May ceremony go on sale March 18.

One nice turn grow awkward when friend asks too much

DEAR ABBY: About a year ago, a good friend, "Beth," went through a violent tragedy that destroyed her family. My husband and I own a small waterfront property, so during the months following, I took Beth away for the weekend to hopefully allow her some healing and emotional recovery. She then asked me to go again and, when I couldn't go, asked if she could go with her friend (whom I had met but don't know well). She asked again to go with her new boyfriend.

I agreed to both of these trips, even though this is our private vacation home. We never rent it. No one has ever used it without us, not even family. Now she's asking again to use our place with her friend.

I feel like a heel to refuse if we're not using the place, but I'm starting to feel a little used. Is it OK for me to tell her no because I am uncomfortable with her repeated requests, or am I just a bad friend?

TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF?

DEAR T.A.O.: You have been generous to Beth. Unless you have explained it to her, she may not realize what a special favor you did her by letting her use your waterfront house. From what you have written, your friend appears to be getting on with her life, so if you decline now it shouldn't shatter her. To do so is NOT being a "bad friend."

DEAR ABBY: Please settle this between my sister and me. My sister carries about 25 credit cards in her purse. Recently she replaced the cardholder she keeps in her purse. I use an RFID wallet and purse, and I explained to her why I chose them. These products protect my identity from scammers. She says I'm being obsessive and worry too much. In today's world, you can't be too cautious. Abby, what are your thoughts on this?

PROTECTING MY IDENTITY

DEAR PROTECTING: I agree you can never be too security conscious. Why your sister would carry 25 credit cards with her at once is surprising, and I'm not sure it's wise. If something should happen to her purse — Radio Frequency ID-blocking wallet or not — she would be up a creek. I hope she keeps copies of her cards and numbers in a separate, secure location in case she needs to cancel them.

DEAR ABBY: A woman I know has ALS, and I want to help. I write medical articles, so reading and explaining new research is a useful skill I have. She has told only a small number of friends that she has the condition, and I learned about it by accident.

It seems silly to me to keep pretending I don't know when everyone else around her does. When I showed her a summary of a research article on ALS, she said she didn't know why I

DEAR ABBY
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



was showing it to her. As long as I know anyway, I wish I could be let in on the secret so I can be helpful. Any ideas?

HELPER IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR HELPER: Yes. You may be well intentioned, but you need to back off. When you put your foot in the door, it was shut firmly in your face. Now it's time to respect her privacy.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Watterson



Garfield®



By Jim Davis

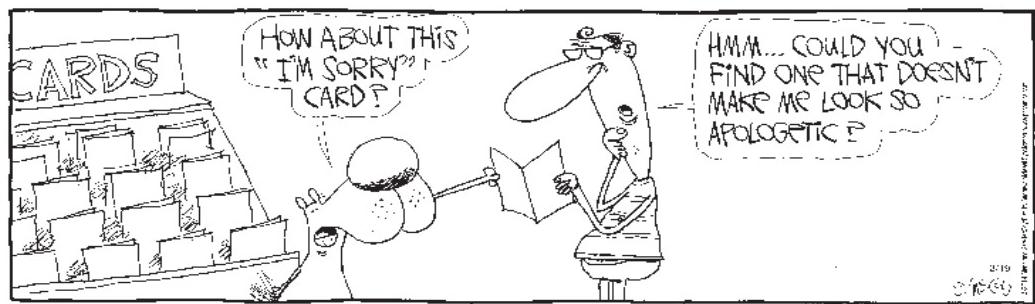
Adam@home



By Bryan Basset



The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

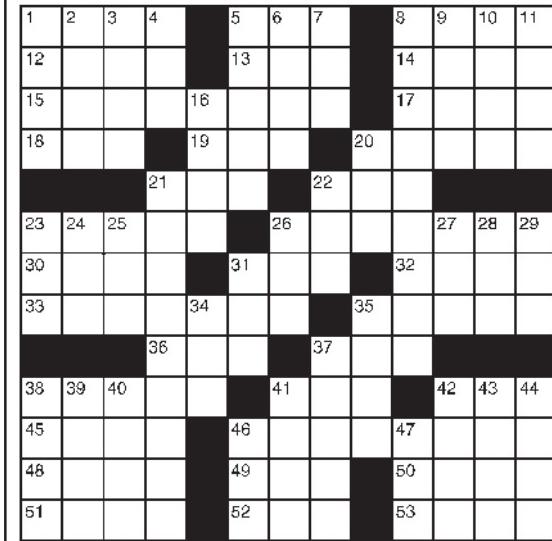
CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	33 "Citizen Kane" sled	51 Like slasher films	16 Detail, briefly	20 Dallas hoopster, briefly
1 Tibetan monk	35 Train tracks	52 Mag. staff	21 Biogaphy	22 Peruke
5 Tri-umphed	36 Observe	53 Shetland, for one	23 Scratch	24 Mill.
8 Used car sites	37 "Ray	38 Dish	25 "Mayday!"	26 Lemon
12 Trojan War hero	Donovan" actor	41 Pirate's drink	27 Wahine's gift	28 Guy's date
13 Lincoln nickname	Voight	42 Expert	6 Bassoon's kin	29 Curvy letter
14 Taj Mahal city	38 Dish	45 San —, Italy	7 Just out	31 Coloration
15 TV fare for a night owl	41 Pirate's drink	46 Single payments	8 Revolving server	34 Spell-off
17 Gusto	42 Expert	47 "Uh-huh"	9 Curved molding	35 Cavort
18 Gallery display	45 San —, Italy	48 Borodin's "Prince —"	10 Serving aid	37 Checker moves
19 "The Raven" writer	49 "Uh-huh"	50 Perched on	11 Auction	38 Bluenose
20 "No way!"	50 Perched on			39 Toy block name
21 Sign before Virgo				40 Cupid's specialty
22 "Now, where — I?"				41 Regretted
23 Vivaldi's output				42 Car
26 Reveal				43 "Let's go!"
30 Dating from				44 Glimpse
31 Embrace				46 Caustic solution
32 Salty septet				47 Potential syrup



Yesterday's answer 2-19



For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5956 99¢ per minute, touchtone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

STUMPED?

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Millie Bobby Brown, 15; Benicio Del Toro, 52; Seal, 56; Jeff Daniels, 64.

Happy Birthday: Look for the good in everyone and everything, but don't be naive. Knowledge is a powerful tool and guide to getting ahead. Do your research, and when you are ready to bring about changes, do so with confidence and a plan. Refuse to let emotional situations dictate how you handle what's going on around you this year. Your numbers are 3, 10, 16, 21, 33, 35, 41.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't worry about what others do or think; it's up to you to be accountable for your actions and take care of your responsibilities. Learn as you go, and make the necessary changes along the way as you strive to improve. ★★★★

Taurus (April 20-May 20): A steady pace will get you where you want to go. Don't let emotions come between you and your dreams. Let go of the past and head into the future with the intent to be and do your best. ★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't lose sight of the truth, even if you want to believe what someone tells you. Home improvements will encourage you to spend more time with family and less time gallivanting with people who don't have your best interests at heart. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Spread your wings and let your imagination help you create. Putting a unique spin on whatever job you are given will not go unnoticed. Love, romance and relationships are highlighted, and with a

little nurturing, will stabilize your life. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Be receptive to what others say, but don't base your actions on the information offered. Go directly to the source, and you'll think twice before you make a promise or align yourself with someone who tends to exaggerate. ★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't divulge information about others if you don't want someone to spread rumors about you. It's best to be a good listener and observer and to put more effort into physical and mental self-improvement. Romance is on the rise. ★★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Use reason and offer solutions. Be willing to walk away if you are met with resistance. If someone doesn't want help, look inward and help yourself. A change may not be wanted, but it might be needed. ★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Stick close to home and protect your possessions, assets and reputation. Someone you work with will try to make you look bad. Don't get angry; get even by doing your best and being successful. Use intelligence and wit, not fists. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You'll be fed false information. Use your resources wisely, and don't count on a single source if you want to find out the truth. A change of pace will help you outmaneuver someone who is trying to use you. ★★★

EUGENIA LAST

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Race to the finish line. Don't wait to see what someone else is going to do. Trust and believe in your ability to handle whatever comes your way. You'll gain respect and an unexpected opportunity to use your talents uniquely. ★★★

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Charm your way through tricky conversations with people trying to trap you into taking on responsibilities that don't belong to you. Taking action and doing your own thing will be your best options if you want to bring about positive change. ★

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Align yourself with people in the know. Gather information using charm and flattery to encourage others to speak openly. An offer should be looked over carefully before you decide to participate. Personal improvement should be a priority. ★★★

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, determined and underrated. You are intuitive and productive. To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

			1								
9				2	5				4		
2	7					8			3		
			2						7		
				9			4				
					9			2			
3						5			8		
6	2						5		8		
7			8	3					6		
					4						

Difficulty Level ★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

8	1	5	9	4	3	2	7	6
4	6	2	7	5	1	9	3	8
7	9	3	2	6	8	4	5	1
6	3	7	8	9	4	1	2	5
1	2	4	6	7	5	3	8	9
5	8	9	3	1	2	7	6	4
9	5	8	4	2	7	6	1	3
2	4	1	5	3	6	8	9	7
3	7	6	1	8	9	5	4	2

Difficulty Level ★★

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUDET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backwords. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SING A JINGLE

C	C	M	E	D	I	A	D	V	E	R	T	I	S
O	O	E	P	A	R	D	Y	N	N	U	F	E	C
P	N	M	G	N	I	S	O	S	S	A	E	D	I
Y	S	O	M	D	B	I	C	L	E	A	N	S	T
R	U	R	E	U	D	I	G	T	A	L	N	T	U
I	M	A	E	A	R	W	O	R	M	S	N	O	I
G	E	B	R	Y	H	C	D	L	G	B	O	I	F
H	R	L	L	T	Y	O	I	N	R	M	I	T	U
T	S	E	○	F	M	V	O	A	Y	S	O	V	I
C	E	L	○	G	E	S	N	K	L	B	I	M	O
I	T	R	○	H	S	D	E	R	S	S	V	O	I

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Holmes rallies to win marathon finish at Riviera

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A marathon finish was only part of the challenge facing J.B. Holmes. He also had to contend with a four-shot deficit against Justin Thomas on greens that were increasingly bumpy with so many footprints over nine hours, and wind that made Riviera tougher than ever.

With one good break, two big putts and plenty of help from Thomas on the back nine, Holmes won the Genesis Open on Sunday for his first PGA Tour title in nearly three years that earned him a trip back to the Masters.

So difficult was the final round of a 34-hole day that Holmes didn't make a birdie over the last eight holes and closed with a 1-under 70.

"I knew it was going to be very difficult to shoot a low score," Holmes said. "I needed some help from Justin."

Thomas shot a 65 in the morning to complete the third round with a four-shot lead. Holmes says his caddie, Brandon Parsons, asked him at one point if he thought Thomas would get to 20-under par, a score only two other players have reached at Riviera.

"I was like, 'You mean this round?' He was playing unbelievable there that third round," Holmes said.

Thomas played a big part in Holmes' victory, however.

He took 19 putts in a wild back nine that featured three two-shot swings because of putting.

Thomas, who closed with a 75, three-putted from long range on the 10th as Holmes made birdie for his first lead of the week. Holmes returned the favor on the next hole when he turned birdie into a shocker of a bogey, three-putting from 3 feet.

And then it was back to Thomas, and what turned out to be the decisive moment.

Holmes missed the 13th green to the right and chipped to 12 feet. Thomas was some 65 feet away and lagged his putt to 8 feet. Holmes made the par putt, and not only did Thomas miss his putt for par, he lipped out the next one for a double bogey.

That took Thomas from one ahead to one behind, and he never caught up.

Holmes delivered another dagger with a 12-foot par save on the 16th right before Thomas made birdie to avoid another two-shot swing, and Thomas couldn't convert birdie chances from 6 feet and 20 feet on the last two holes.

"To take two steps back with a double is huge because it was so hard to make birdies, especially with 14, 15, 16 coming up, three holes dead into the teeth," Thomas said,



J.B. Holmes, right, holds up his trophy with Tiger Woods on the 18th green after winning the Genesis Open golf tournament at Riviera Country Club on Sunday, Feb. 17, 2019, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles. AP

alluding to the wind. "I'm sure he would say that was probably the biggest turning point of the round for him, and that putt on 16."

Thomas said he struggled putting in the wind and it "showed a flaw in my game."

"J.B. won. He played great,"

Thomas said of his fellow Kentuckian, whom he has known since he was a kid. "It's always a bummer to hand a tournament. I feel like I should have won that thing."

Holmes, who finished at 14-under 270, moved up from No. 100 to No. 42 in the world, making him eligible for the World Golf Championships in Mexico City next week. But it's been a long stretch, and he decided not to play. As for that invitation to the Masters?

"Let me think about it," he said with a grin. "No, it's always good to go back."

Tiger Woods shot 65 to finish his morning third round, though he was never in range

of winning. Woods closed with a 72 in the afternoon, and tied for 15th.

"I got tired," Woods said. "I don't know if I'm the only one, but I definitely felt it today."

Wind, cold. I was at 10 (under) and I slipped four shots coming in. That's the way it goes."

He said he wouldn't touch his clubs on Monday as he goes from cold air at sea level to Mexico City next week.

Maybe the biggest break for Holmes was at the par-4 seventh, when his wedge from a bunker didn't clear the lip and buried into the grass framing the sand. He at first feared he couldn't find it. Once he did, he was given relief from an embedded ball and escaped with a bogey.

Holmes and Thomas weren't the only ones who struggled on greens. Adam Scott was right in the hunt until he missed six consecutive putts from under 10 feet that dropped him out of con-

tention quickly.

Scott closed with a 76 and tied for seventh.

"You're going to miss a few out there," Scott said. "We saw some four-putts and three-putts, but you can't miss every one for six straight holes. ... If you look at J.B., why he won, he holed unbelievable putts and I didn't today."

Si Woo Kim had a 66, the low score of the final round, and finished third. Rory McIlroy almost got back in the game when he holed a bunker shot on the 16th to get within two shots, but he failed to birdie the par-5 17th and was fooled by the wind in making bogey on the final hole for a 69. He tied for fourth with Marc Leishman (68).

No one had a tougher time than Jordan Spieth, whose final round included a birdie, par, bogey, double bogey, triple bogey and quadruple bogey, the latter on the 10th hole when he hit four shots out of bunkers. He shot 81, his second-highest score as a pro.

Temperature, delays take their toll on Tiger

ACIFIC PALISADES, Calif. — Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods remain tied with zero wins at storied Riviera.

At the fabled course where many of golf's greats have hoisted a trophy, the game's two greatest remain shut out after Woods was unable to make a Genesis Open final-round charge and finished tied for 15th. But at least this time around Woods put on a show fans won't soon forget.

With weekend rounds of 65 and 72, Woods may have redefined his Riviera narrative that has sagged after a 12-year absence followed by his 2018 return and a missed cut. Southern California's native son has not conjured up much magic at the historic links where he played his first PGA Tour event in 1992, other than one second-place finish last century.

Woods' "futility" here has been a bit overstated given multiple rounds of 65 or better. Yet this year's Saturday afternoon charge included a 5-under-par start through four holes, sending Tiger roars through Santa Monica Canyon. Not since Phil Mickelson's final-hole birdie here in 2012 or Nicklaus' final-round Riviera runs in the 1983 PGA and 1998 U.S. Senior Open, have L.A. fans been treated to an all-time great putting on such a show.

With cold temperatures and a break between Saturday's delayed second and third rounds, a surprising number stayed late for the restart, including actor Josh Duhamel and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin. Woods rewarded the crowd with a birdie-eagle-birdie-birdie run recorded mostly by cell phones. Woods' playing partners Peter Malnati and Cody Gribble looked understandably overwhelmed by the size and volume of the crowd, but Woods appeared to finally find confidence on the greens, which was lacking in his first two rounds.

His first HD-era Riviera highlight came Saturday afternoon at the par-5 11th, which, combined with the three birdies, vaulted him into some semblance of contention. When Mickelson followed with an eagle back at the 10th, the roars through the canyon gave resilient fans a long-overdue

Tiger memory inside Los Angeles city limits.

He continued the steady play early Sunday, but 2 a.m. wake-up calls got the best of the 43-year-old. He finished the week at 6-under, eight shots behind winner J.B. Holmes.

"I got tired," Woods said. "I don't know if I'm the only one, but I definitely felt it today."

Until flaming out late Sunday as winds picked up, Woods appeared to improve in comfort level, energy and focus as the week progressed, with his ball-striking strong throughout the week. Hit hit 36 of 56 fairways and 51 of 72 greens. But the gradual improvement that peaked Saturday also suggests the tournament host's early week schedule might need to be curtailed if he wants to win at Riviera.

"This is a busy week," he said when asked if the obligations were a distraction. "Anytime I've hosted events over the last, what, 20 years now, they're busy weeks. There's a lot to do as part of hosting duties and playing. So I've done it before, I've been successful at it, and hopefully we can get it going here."

With his window to win at Riviera gradually closing, the 14-time major champion and 80-time PGA Tour winner will have had a complete career regardless of what happens in Pacific Palisades. But wouldn't it be incredible if he sets the new bar for tour wins at the place where it all started?

Meanwhile, the PGA Tour has been more like the Apology Tour this week at the Genesis Open.

First, it was Sergio Garcia, offering up a mea culpa for his temper tantrums that led to disqualification two weeks ago in Saudi Arabia. Then the next best thing that could have happened to him did: Matt Kuchar.

After playing to a crowd that included more than a few hecklers over having paid his fill-in caddie a paltry sum (\$5,000) en route to winning (\$1.29 million) in Mexico last fall, not to mention a media and public relations firestorm that was quickly engulfing him, Kuchar issued a statement apologizing for the matter and said he'd paid the caddie, David Ortiz, the full amount (\$50,000) that he'd requested.

Manfred: Pitch clock coming in spring



WEST PALM
BEACH,
Fla.

—Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred refuses to believe his game is broken merely because a gaggle of the sport's greatest stars remain unemployed as spring training camps kick into overdrive.

After all, he represents the game's owners, who for the first time in decades are succeeding greatly at keeping player costs flat, even as players chafe, agents fume and some fans wonder why their team has no interest in Bryce Harper, Manny Machado or any number of available luminaries.

Yet, even the man who in November received a contract extension from his 30 bosses through 2024 has his limits.

"I hate the negativity that surrounds the coverage of the game right now," Manfred said Sunday at a media event on the eve of many full squads reporting for camps. "Probably the best antidote for that is to get out there and start playing the game. I think once we get out and start playing the game, the glow of positivity will reemerge."

But fans looking for the familiar may be further unsettled once Grapefruit and Cactus league games get underway next week.

Manfred announced that a 20-second pitch clock will be ready to roll for spring training games, as MLB "will get ready for the possibility of seeing a pitch clock by opening day," he said. "The only prudent course for us is to be in a position to proceed—hopefully under our collectively bargained conditions."

Indeed, Manfred hopes to hammer out an agreement with MLB Players' Association executive director Tony Clark on a pitch clock, rather than unilaterally implement it, as is his right per the CBA.

But the clock is just one line item in a brewing labor showdown that began with last winter's freezeout of veteran players and continued this offseason as Harper and Machado—both in their prime, at 26, and both still MVP-caliber talents—remain available.

The chorus of elite players ripping a mode of compensation that has flattened their pay even as industry revenues top \$10 billion has been loud all winter, first on social media and then as camps opened last week.

Manfred did not waste his chance at the bully pulpit to respond.

In direct and veiled statements, Manfred shifted the blame of unmet expectations on super agent Scott Boras, whose dream of a \$400 million deal for Harper will al-



AP
Milwaukee Brewers' Deolis Guerra throws during a spring training baseball workout Sunday, Feb. 17, 2019, in Phoenix.

most certainly go unfilled.

And while saying his relationship with Clark remained strong, he also chided the MLBPA chief for his February 2018 grievance that claimed the Rays, Marlins, A's and Pirates were not properly pouring revenue-sharing receipts into major league payroll.

Only the Marlins finished with a losing record in that bunch while the A's made the playoffs with 97 wins.

"The assertion that teams aren't trying started last spring training with Tony Clark singling out four teams," Manfred said. "He did very poorly with those four teams. This narrative that our teams are not trying is just not supported by the facts. Every single team wants to win."

"It may look a little different to outsiders—the way people think about the game, the way a winning team is put together. That doesn't mean teams are not trying."

And he seemed particularly flummoxed at the threat of a player strike in 2021 floated by St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Adam Wainwright.

"There is no personal acrimony between me and Tony Clark," Manfred said. "I do believe it's unfortunate, and represents a fundamental misunderstanding of how to conduct good labor relations, to have people running around three years before an agreement expires, that there's going to be a strike."

"I have a degree in labor relations. I've never heard that tactic."

Indeed, most players have taken a far more sober approach to the endless winter. That doesn't mean the resistance isn't there.

"You look at overall revenue versus what the players are getting paid, it's not correlated anymore," Houston Astros ace Justin Verlander told USA TODAY Sports on Sunday. "The value is decreased on players when it shouldn't be; revenues are going up."

"I've got a great life and appreciate all that's come my way. I've worked very hard for it. I get to play a sport for a job and make a lot of money doing it. But as is with any business, you want it to be fair. If it's not, that's why we have a union, that's why we organize, that's why we lean on each other to make it right."

Baseball has three more seasons to get it right. Until then, the bright skies Manfred hopes for may be harder to find.

Moustakas, Brewers nearing deal for \$10M

MILWAUKEE—Mike Moustakas and the Brewers are nearing a deal that would keep the third baseman in Milwaukee for a guarantee of \$10 million, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press.

The person spoke Sunday on condition of anonymity because the agreement will be subject to a successful physical. The sides were negotiating a deal that includes a mutual option for 2020, the person said.

Talks toward a deal were first reported by The Athletic.

Moustakas' deal would be his second in a row for one guaranteed year on the free-agent market. He rejected a \$17.4 million qualifying offer from Kansas City after the 2017 season and returned to the Royals in mid-March for a one-year contract that included a guaranteed \$6.5 million: a \$5.5 million salary and \$1 million option buyout. Moustakas earned an additional \$2.2 million in performance bonuses based on plate appearances, raising his total earnings in the deal to \$8.7 million.

Moustakas hit .256 with eight homers and 33 RBIs in 54 games for Milwaukee,

which acquired him from the last-place Royals on July 27. A 30-year-old left-handed hitter, Moustakas had a .251 average overall with 28 homers and 95 RBIs last year.

Part of the core that led the 2015 Royals to the team's first World Series title in 30 years, Moustakas hit a franchise-record 38 home runs in 2017. After re-signing last March, he hit 20 home runs in 98 games and then was dealt to the Brewers for outfielder Brett Phillips and right-handed pitcher Jorge Lopez.

Moustakas hit .200 (8 for 40) with no homers and three RBIs in the Division Series against Colorado and the League Championship Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers, striking out against Clayton Kershaw for the final out of the Brewers' year. After the season, he joined Milwaukee's Ryan Braun and Christian Yelich, fellow Southern Californians, to sponsor relief efforts following wildfires in the area.

"Obviously, he was a great addition to this team last year in the second half after the deadline," Yelich said. "He's a great player, a great clubhouse guy, and he definitely helped us on the field."

Meanwhile, veteran short-

stop Adeiny Hechavarria and the New York Mets have agreed to a minor league contract with an invitation to spring training, according to a person familiar with the deal.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Sunday because the deal is pending a physical planned for Monday, when Hechavarria is expected to arrive at Mets camp in Port St. Lucie.

Hechavarria is a light hitter known for his defense. He gives New York a legitimate, established shortstop who could be a backup to young starter Amed Rosario. Even with a crowded infield, that's something the Mets were lacking as they opened spring training.

"From the onset we wanted to create depth and versatility at a variety of positions. The shortstop position in particular was one that we felt like we wanted to continue to create options," new general manager Brodie Van Wagenen said at spring training media day. "Rosario is a premium guy. He's young and he's improving every day and the goal is to make sure we can surround him with not only support to get better, but

also give us some protection in the event that we need to get him help or need to replace him in some scenario. So that was something we've wanted to do from the beginning of the offseason."

Hechavarria, who turns 30 in April, batted a combined .247 with six homers, 31 RBIs and a .624 OPS in 94 games last season for the Rays, Pirates and Yankees. He has also played for Toronto and Miami and is a .254 career hitter with a .635 OPS in seven major league seasons.

"This is a team that we do think can contend, and you can't contend unless you have depth and have major league players to come in and fill in," Van Wagenen said.

In other news, left-hander Aaron Loup and the San Diego Padres have agreed to a one-year contract that guarantees \$1.4 million, a deal that includes a team option for 2020.

Loup gets a \$1.2 million salary this year under the agreement announced Sunday. San Diego's option is for \$2 million with a \$200,000 buyout.

He can earn an additional \$800,000 annually in performance bonuses based on appearances.

Team LeBron bounces back to beat Team Giannis

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — LeBron James was trading lob pass with Dwyane Wade again, one last time. Lobs from Kyrie Irving once again, too. And after making a stepback 3-pointer late, he stared down Joel Embiid to send a message without saying a word.

Oh, this mattered.

Team LeBron, down by 20 in the second half, finally got firing and went on to beat Team Giannis 178-164 in the All-Star Game on Sunday night. MVP Kevin Durant scored 31 points for Team LeBron, the one that James drafted and led to victory in the captain's-choice format for a second consecutive season. Klay Thompson scored 20, and James and Kawhi Leonard each scored 19 for the winners.

Giannis Antetokounmpo—the first-time captain—led everybody with 38 points for the club he drafted. Paul George and Khris Middleton each scored 20 points for Team Giannis, which got 17 apiece from Stephen Curry and Russell Westbrook.

"We just started making shots," Durant said.

Durant is now a two-time MVP, also winning it back in 2012. He lauded Charlotte for the weekend.

"Thanks for the hospitality," Durant said. "It was an amazing weekend. Glad we capped it off with a 'W.'"

The highlights, as would be expected, were absurdly good, time and again.

Curry slammed the ball off the floor on a first-half fast break and watched it ricochet toward the rim with an apex that flirted with the top of the backboard. Too high for most humans—but Antetokounmpo isn't most humans. The freakishly long Greek star slammed Curry's unconventional alley-oop pass home, with both benches reacting in disbelief.

It was not a defensive showcase, as always.

Team Giannis set an All-Star record with 23 field goals in the first quarter, topping the mark of 22 set on four other occasions—by both the West and the East in the first quarter of the 2017 game, and by the West in both the second and third quarters of the 2016 game.

The 53 points tied a one-quarter All-Star record as well, matching the total by the West in the third quarter of the 2016 games and by the East in the first quarter of the 2017 game. But when it was time to get competitive, things tightened up considerably, at least by All-Star standards.

But when Team LeBron used a flurry of 3s to get back into it, everyone on the bench was standing—sometimes running from the bench and



onto the court during play, the celebrations a bit more exuberant than what's usually allowed.

And the All-Star farewells for Miami's Wade and Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki—the adds to the game by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, in honor of their career bodies of work—were festive, as everyone wanted.

Nowitzki entered the game late in the first quarter and made his first three shots—all of them 3-pointers—before heading back to the bench. Wade checked in not long after Nowitzki took the floor, then started the second half and achieved his primary missions for his last All-Star Game as a player.

He got an alley-oop lob from James. And he threw an alley-oop lob to James.

Wade dunked, James

dunked, and the close friends who entered the NBA together in 2003 and won championships with Miami in 2012 and 2013 got a couple more moments to savor in their final night as on-court teammates.

Wade finished with seven points in 10 minutes, and Nowitzki never returned after his nine-point, four-minute

opening stint. When the third quarter ended, every player gathered behind them as Wade and Nowitzki were honored with commemorative jerseys at midcourt.

"Thank you to the commissioner and the NBA for allowing us to both be on this stage again," Nowitzki said.

"Exactly what Dirk said," Wade said as he took the microphone. "We're very thankful for this opportunity. The game is in great hands. It's easy to walk away right now."

Antetokounmpo was

awarded a first-quarter free throw—but instead of shooting it, he tossed a pass to himself off the backboard. It isn't legal, and didn't work, but he didn't mind. Joel Embiid had 12 rebounds and Antetokounmpo added 11. Kemba Walker, the lone Charlotte player in the game, had four points on 2-for-8 shooting.

James spent part of half-time on the court listening to J. Cole's performance, then grabbed a hug from New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft. New Orleans' Anthony Davis, who was dealing with a muscle strain in his shoulder, played five minutes and made both of his shot attempts.

SPLAT BROTHERS

Ordinarily "Splash Brothers" in Golden State, Curry went splat—courtesy of Klay Thompson.

Early in the fourth quarter, Curry shot a 3-pointer from the right wing while getting

AP Team LeBron's Kevin Durant of the Golden State Warriors works against Team Giannis during the second half of an NBA All-Star basketball game, Sunday, Feb. 17, 2019, in Charlotte, N.C.

fouled by someone who's usually his teammate. Thompson gave a dismissive wave, as if to ask "Why'd I do that?" when Curry's 3 swished. And Curry made the free throw to seal the four-point play.

"I felt like the opposition for once. ... It sucked to be on the receiving end," Thompson said. "But it's all fun and games in the All-Star Game and that was a crazy shot."

OLADIPO SPEAKS

Victor Oladipo's season is

over with a leg injury that kept him from playing in the All-Star Game as well. The Indiana Pacers star, however, was watching. "Wish I could be there playing with you guys but I know this will be a good game to watch!" Oladipo tweeted. "I was on Team LeBron last year but this year it's all about #TeamGiannis! Lets Go Fellas!!!" Oladipo was replaced on the Team Giannis roster by Brooklyn's D'Angelo Russell.

NO-FIGHT NIGHT

There were no fights, though that didn't stop the league from bringing in renowned boxing ring announcer Michael Buffer to deliver his famed "Let's get ready to rumble" proclamation just before tip-off.

Durant wins MVP

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—LeBron James' slumping Lakers are below .500 and out of playoff position.

But his star-studded hand-picked Team LeBron squad led by Kevin Durant showed resilience at Sunday's All-Star Game, rallying from a 20-point first-half deficit to defeat Team Giannis 178-164 at Spectrum Center.

If only James could take some of these guys back to Los Angeles.

Kevin Durant won All-Star Game MVP, scoring 31 points on 6-of-9 from 3-point range for Team LeBron in his 10th All-Star appearance. Maybe next February, the free-agent Durant could be at the All-Star Game representing New York.

There were no Knicks or former Knicks in the contest. Nets guard D'Angelo Russell, who played just 12 minutes for Team Giannis, finished with six points and three assists.

Giannis Antetokounmpo looked like he'd be going back to Milwaukee with MVP honors, but he—and his team—slowed down in the second half. He still finished with 38 points and 11 rebounds. James collected 19 points, though he was on the bench when his club made a key 19-2 third-quarter run that turned the game around.

The game set an All-Star record for 3-pointers made with 62. The teams combined for 177 points in the first half.

Antetokounmpo is usually unguardable, and in the opening seven minutes, Team LeBron refused to guard the 6-foot-11 athletic specimen.

Antetokounmpo dunked his way to 16 points on 8-of-8 shooting in the first seven

minutes and his team opened up an early lead that it extended to 53-37 after one and 95-82 at intermission.

Antetokounmpo was having too much fun as he racked up 20 first-half points in 12:33. When he went to the free-throw line, he knocked the ball off the backboard and followed it in for a slam. Of course, it was an illegal play and he got whistled for a lane violation.

In the most circus-like of Antetokounmpo's points, hometown hero Stephen Curry bounced a pass that sailed sky-high above the rim and the Bucks' MVP candidate slammed it home as it came down, grabbing it at the top of the box. The Team Giannis bench erupted.

"I had my name on the MVP until the third quarter" said Antetokounmpo.

James was quiet offensively in the opening quarter but hooked up Durant for an alley-oop dunk. Wearing pink shoes, Durant got busy in making five shots but also got angry at Sixers center Joel Embiid.

They exchanged words after Embiid fouled him while guarding him overzealously.

Thriving in transition, Team Giannis built an 18-point lead, even getting a boost from 40-year-old Dirk Nowitzki, who drilled three straight 3-pointers, including a rainbow from 30 feet. After the first two, the expected retiree kissed his hand and waved it to the floor.

Unsung Bucks forward Kris Middleton, in his first All-Star Game, had a huge first half, even stealing one the ball in the backcourt from James for a layup. He finished with 20 points and drilled 6-of-10 3-pointers.

San Jose 1 recovers, leads Rocball semis cast

 San Jose 1 notched a pair of come-from-behind wins to remain unbeaten and march into the semifinal round of the 2019 Rocball League.

San Jose 1, which is playing in the league for the first time, eked out a 38-37 victory over KMA last week at the Marianas High School Gymnasium and then followed it up with a 37-31 triumph versus former champions Teachers to earn a 5-0 mark going into the Final Four round.

Joining San Jose 1 in the semis are KMA, and WTA, while Fam Bam, Laly Four, San Jose 2, T.D., and VAD have been eliminated. The two other squads—Teachers and Bumpers—will square off this week for the fourth and last semis ticket. The Bumpers and Teachers hold identical 2-2 records and since their match is sort of a playoff, neither team will be allowed to recruit players from those squads that have been booted out.



San Jose 1 and Teachers players pose for a photo after their game in the 2019 Rocball League last week at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Meanwhile, besides securing a semis berth, KMA also leads the league in aces with 37 and in goals (nine). VAD and WTA are ahead in xunks (seven) and kees (10) and

the latter also has the most jams so far this season with two.

In the individual statistics, Kaystone Rafalopei is the league's heavy hitter so

far with 13 aces (26 points), while Liam Arriola, Mathew Carlos, J.R. Christopher, Fatima Monterubio, Kevin Kukkun, Noryanka Skerei, Amu Itibus, and Keanu Ho-

sono have scored two xunks apiece (4 points). Nick Gross and Bailey Spaeth are on top of the kees (7) and jams (2) categories, respectively, while the latter is

also among the players with three goals each (9 points), joining J.R. Christopher, T.J. Eina, Jerrid Rosario, Nathan Celis, and Itibus on the list. (*Saipan Tribune*)



NEW YORK
The settlement between Colin Kaepernick and the NFL over his collusion suit has led to speculation over what's next.

As in, will the settlement open the door for a team to sign the 31-year-old quarterback?

Kaepernick's lawyer Mark Geragos believes so and has pointed out a pair of landing spots he believes are likely.

"I'm going to make a bold prediction that one of three

TUDELA

From Page 24

home empty-handed after earning the boys U10 singles title. Yu defeated Lina Tsukagoshi in their finals showdown yesterday, 6-1. Tsukagoshi made it to the title game following a 6-2 victory over Yutaka Kadokura, while Yu topped June Lim in the other semis match, 6-4. Jun won the battle for third place against Kadokura, 6-3.

Lawyer predicts Pats or Panthers may sign Kaepernick



In this Nov. 20, 2016 file photo, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick (7) tries to escape from New England Patriots strong safety Patrick Chung (23) and defensive end Trey Flowers (98) before Chung sacked him during the first half of an NFL football game in Santa Clara, Calif. (AP)

teams picks him up," Geragos recently told CNN. "The natural would be if Cam Newton is out, then the natural place would be to play with Eric (Reid) in Carolina."

Reid, the Panthers safety who recently signed a three-year extension in Carolina, was a plaintiff alongside Kaepernick in the collusion case against the NFL.

Geragos is playing into the speculation that Newton could take a season off with a shoulder injury, an idea floated by Panthers owner David Tepper after the season ended.

Tepper, a first-year owner, took over for team founder Jerry Richardson, who was forced out of the league after sexual harassment allegations surfaced. He oversaw the signing of Reid and would appear a likely candidate to sign Kaepernick as well if any owner is.

Geragos also noted the New

England Patriots as a possibility.

"Besides the Panthers, it would not surprise me if (Patriots owner) Bob Kraft makes a move," Geragos said. "That would not surprise me."

Kraft is a noted supporter of President Donald Trump, who has led the charge against NFL

protests, urging owners to "get that son of a bitch off the field" at an Alabama political rally in 2017.

Despite his support of Trump, Kraft was critical of Trump's tone on player protests. Kraft is also a supporter of rapper Meek Mill, who served a controversial prison

sentence over a probation violation. It's a stance that aligns with Kaepernick's calls for social justice.

How Geragos believes Kaepernick would fit with Tom Brady is unclear.

Meanwhile, NFL has long shown that it does not know

GCA, respectively, are just as eager to begin competing as their male counterparts are.

"I'm super excited to finally be back on the court with my teammates," Han said. "I think the basketball season will hype many students up, especially after the volleyball season and final exams."

"I am excited for this new CCOPSA season for basketball because it will be the first time in a long while for GCA to have a high school girls basketball team," Phan said.

"The last time there was a girls varsity basketball] team was when I was in 8th grade, so it's been about four years since we had a team."

Phan also took note of the significant improvements their team have shown in their training sessions and how these will help make up for their lack of experience.

"The team is fairly new to the sport of basketball, but they have shown great improvement since the beginning of our practice sessions," Phan

said. "We've been practicing different strategies and teaching the basics to make the game easier to understand."

Not to be outdone, Mt. Carmel's boys and girls teams have also geared up for the basketball season despite facing many obstacles, including the lack of a home court after it was damaged by Super Typhoon Yutu.

"We have been preparing for three months since Typhoon Yutu struck our island, leaving massive destruction to

CCOPSA

From Page 24

game until tomorrow when they take on Agape at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

Factor was part of the Knights crew that won last season's title and he knew the opposing teams are all eyes on them, as they try to grab the championship trophy away from Mt. Carmel.

"I know all schools are hungry to beat us, but we will see what they have for us," Factor said.

Eagles captain, Marcky Masilungan, meanwhile, has mixed feelings about the season. "I'm kinda nervous heading into the season since volleyball had just come to an end and the intermission seems kinda rushed," Masilungan said. "Nonetheless, I'm excited to compete with the other teams and see what they have in store for us."

GCA was Mt. Carmel's fin-

als foe last season.

Louisa Han and Jasmine

Phan, captains for MCS and

our home court," Factor said. "That doesn't stop us from practicing with this young group of talented ballers."

Han added that their practices are done in unconventional ways due to the unavailability of their basketball court.

"We've been conditioning at the beach [in preparation] for the season," Han said. "The most important factor of basketball is teamwork and endurance. Therefore, we are focusing extra hard on conditioning!"



Manfred: Pitch
clock coming
in spring

PAGE 21

Saipan Tribune Sports

Team LeBron
bounces back
to beat Team
Giannis
PAGE 22



24 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tudela, Hwang survive finale



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Juncheol Hwang, left, and Vincent Tudela return to Robbie Schorr and Daniel Heo during their mixed-up doubles title game in the 2019 White Coconut Tennis Classic yesterday at the American Memorial Park courts.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Vincent Tudela and Juncheol Hwang outlasted Robbie Schorr and Daniel Heo in an extended finale to clinch the mixed-up doubles title in the 2019 White Coconut Tennis Classic yesterday afternoon at the American Memorial Park courts.

The No. 1 seed needed a super-tiebreaker third set to slip past Schorr and Heo in the championship game and rule the 29-team field. Tudela and Hwang drew first blood in the finals with a 6-3 triumph in the opening set, but failed to finish off their foes when Schorr and Heo took the win in the second in similar scores. Then in the deciding set, the opposing teams went and back forth before Tudela and Hwang got the crucial points to secure the tough 10-8 victory.

The eventual champions marched into the title match after sweeping their opponents over the weekend. Tudela and Hwang first downed No. 8 Jeff



Race and Hoo Wang last Saturday, 7-5, 6-3, and then defeated No. 4 Jun Wang and Tania Tan last Sunday, 6-2, 7-5, to earn the finals berth at the top half of the draw.

At the bottom half, the third-seeded Schorr and Heo outclassed No. 6 Sam Ryu and Jaehoon Son, 6-1, 6-4, to advance to the semifinals. In the Final Four, Heo and Schorr were pitted against No. 2 Andrew Chung and Jimin Woo and took two sets to win the match, 6-3, 6-1, and set up a championship showdown versus Tudela and Hwang.

The mixed-up doubles winners' super-tiebreaker third set victory was their only game that went the distance,

as earlier in the first round, Tudela and Hwang dispatched Marivic Dunlop and Savita Sikkel, 6-1, 6-3. Heo and Schorr also recorded their three wins via sweeps before their streak was snapped by Tudela and Hwang.

Hwang notched his second straight mixed-up doubles crown, as last year he and Race defeated Ken Song and Isaac Heo in the finals, 7-5, 6-3. The mixed-up doubles title was also Hwang's second in the same competition this season, as earlier yesterday morning he topped the boys U12 singles event.

Hwang eased past June Yu in the finale, 6-1, 6-1, completing a clean slate in the division. Hwang shut down Wataru Kadokura in their semis game, 6-0, 6-0, to move into the finals against Yu, who eliminated Takeru Jim in the other Final Four tiff, 6-4, 6-4. Jim rounded out the Top 3 in the boys U12 singles event following a thrilling 4-6, 6-2, 10-8 win over Kadokura yesterday.

Despite losing in the championship game in the boys U12 singles contest, Yu did not go

See TUDELA on Page 23



CCOPSA caging opens season with triple-header

By ROBY N. PAMINTUAN
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CORRESPONDENT

Three games will kick off the action in the 2018-2019 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Association Varsity Basketball League today, as players from all 12 teams are looking forward for an exciting season.

Kagman High School will be hosting Saipan International School in the boys division game at 3:30pm, while over at the Koblerville Gymnasium, Saipan Southern High School will be taking on Grace Christian Academy. For another boys division match, Agape Christian School 1 will be welcoming Mount Carmel School 2 in the Torchbearers' home turf in Gualo Rai.

"I think this tournament is going to be fun," KHS captain Dean Blake said when asked about the competition. "I really can't wait to see what the other players can do on the court. It should be interesting."

Kagman and Saipan

Southern are fielding one team each in the boys and girls divisions, making the league even more competitive this season.

"I feel energized as we kick off the CCOPSA league



and I play one last time for Mount Carmel School," said team captain Angelo Factor whose squad (MC1) won't be playing their first

See CCOPSA on Page 23



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mt. Carmel School's Angelo Factor, right, drives baseline after getting a screen from teammate Jaydon Tenorio, left, during their boys high school division title game against Grace Christian Academy last season at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.